

O U R W A Y

This issue is dedicated to our dead friends. They live in our minds and in our work. We all owe them much; some owe them everything. They have toiled and helped to start the work which we are now continuing. Their spirit which is now ours has brought us together again, after all hardship and tragedy. New groups have formed and we are held together by our "News" - our "fact finding" organ. It will show what we are doing and where we are going. New paths will be broken and new forms or organizations may spring up. Consciously, we shall put more stress on work and investigation than on words. We shall abstain from overtire-some repetitions, but will stress all progress made. We will, as always, abstain from forming new terminologies which are likely to obscure the issues and in this way contribute toward finding a way out of the maze of words and new terms which have hampered greatly progress in psychopathology. We shall be eager to add new knowledge, from wherever it may come, to our work, to broaden the path of truth. Personally amid this fighting world, we shall not work against each other, but aim to cooperate with all our friends and therewith gain strength. Thus we shall honor, cherish and keep alive the spirit of our dead friends.

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FAILURES OF PERSONALITIES

Alfred Adler

Everybody has always known what a failure is. But to understand the structure of failures and why we call them failures depends upon the deviation of any action from the action-line which is fixed upon us by the power of evolution. By this strength of evolution we are forced to cooperate, to develop social interest. Therefore each greater deviation from this line in which we have to move, we call a failure. Therefore, it is not so difficult to understand that each failure is characterized by a lack of social interest, and the greater this lack is, the greater is the failure. There are also other views to be considered.

The degree of activity must also be considered, because the right social interest demands a certain degree of activity. A person can fail in social interest because of a certain lack in his activity. If you consider these two points clearly, and if you are trained to "feel" them - because you have no means of measuring them - you will find the structure not only of all the failures we know, but also the differences between failures in each type.

It is not difficult to mention some types of failures as, for instance, problem children, neurotic persons, insane persons, criminals, suicides, drunkards, drug addicts, prostitutes, sexual perverts. And in addition to these we must also mention some types of queer persons who are not fitted for our social life, and who are never happy or socially adjusted, never liked, etc. But in every type you find different degrees of ability of cooperation, and among all the individuals of each type you find different degrees of activity. You can see it among problem children. Some of them are very active, and others very passive. Without doubt, if you dig into it more deeply you will see a certain degree of activity always exists because life means movement. Moreover, in

every case, whether it is passive or active, socially adjusted or not, you always find a goal which seems to hint at a goal of superiority, a goal by which the individual feels he has overcome the difficulties of life and solved the problems of life.

There are different goals whereby persons try to achieve superiority, to overcome this common and eternal feeling of inferiority which is present in each human being. But these goals don't always provide the right way for contribution and cooperation. For instance, it may be a goal to compel, to rule, to tyrannize over others, to look down on others, to be hypercritical, to find faults, to nag etc. This gives a feeling of being on a higher level than the other "poor" person who is undervalued. Or it may be a goal of not solving the problems at all, but of staying behind, not moving much, and expecting that the problems and questions and tasks should be solved by other persons. Now, what we expect of persons who are rightly adjusted is that they should have a goal of cooperation and contribution.

It would not be sufficient to merely mention the failures and thus to understand the degree of social interest and the degree of activity. We can understand that, for instance, a neurotic person cannot have a great degree of activity, being mostly afraid, timid, shrinking away from the solution of problems. You will not find much activity among such people. The same is also true in cases of insanity. These people give the impression that they must be put into an asylum, that they must be watched, not permitted to act in their queer way. They are not active. But in each case of a neurosis, among all insane persons, you find a different degree of activity. You do not find social interest, or at least, not much. You may find slight degrees of it, but you cannot find much activity among neurotic and insane persons.

The style of life of a person, with the individual degree of social interest and activity, is fixed and accomplished in the first three or four years of life. Therefore, if such a style of life is not rightly accomplished, if the child does not have enough social interest, does not cooperate, and does not have the right degree of activity, you can tell what will happen to this child later in life.

Now, if he does not have much activity and if he becomes a failure later, then he will be more inclined to become neurotic, or perhaps insane. Among neurotic persons or insane persons you always find a high degree of anxiety in their early childhood, bashfulness, for instance, self-consciousness, and such characteristics.

You cannot find courage among children who later become criminals. But you find activity. And this must really be distinguished. Activity is not courage. Courage means only solving the social problems, and criminals do not do this.

But a child with no activity would never become a criminal. He might become a delinquent perhaps, with the lowest degree of activity possessed by a criminal. He might be a pickpocket, but no more - not a burglar, not a holdup man, etc.

Now, it is very important to have a key with which to understand why we have to correct failures made in the early childhood, because here we see clearly what can happen later in life.

A suicide also has some activity in childhood. And this can be seen if you study the lives of persons who have committed or have tried to commit suicide. They have a certain degree of activity, but a special kind of activity. You find that they were children who tried very often to hurt others by hurting themselves. They may later, if they find themselves failing, be inclined to do the same thing. And then it means suicide.

Drunkards also have a certain degree of activity in childhood. They are usually active and are able to move in regard to the problem of friendship, the problem of occupation, and the problem of love. However, they do not move in the right way, and this can be seen in all their steps. But they move; they have a certain degree of activity.

Among the sexual perverts are different degrees of activity. There are some who are very passive, and some who are very active. But do not forget that even the most passive persons also have a goal of superiority. For instance, a passive homosexual man behaves like a girl, and courts a man, with the view of being admired, of being worshipped. In this way he has a feeling of superiority, because he is able to arouse the feelings of another man for himself.

Now, we see failures originating very early in life. Some of these failures can be seen during the first weeks after birth, for instance, if a child is always screaming, always occupying his mother, never fitting into the routine of the household. Later in the life of such a child very often the mother will tell you that this child always has made trouble from the beginning. Of course, not from the first day, but after several days, and after some weeks a child can be spoiled so that this cooperation fails. This is usually the result of the fact that the child had not been trained for cooperation from the first day of his life. And if you look more deeply into the case histories of failures you will always find that they had not been trained in the right way, and even in early childhood, mistakes, deviations, and symptoms had arisen. And so I want to speak about these situations in which failures can be seen.

We understand that these are always situations which work like a test to prove if this child is rightly prepared for cooperation or not. As I said, it can be seen during the first weeks of a child's life. For instance, if a child is always crying during the night, if he does not sleep, is never content, always occupying others, always wanting to be carried around, etc., we can understand that this child was trained to be a nuisance during the first weeks. The child is not guilty, but he has experienced such situations in which he feels satisfied in controlling others. This is not cooperation, and therefore such a test situation can arise very early in the life of this child. Later the attitude of a child towards his father offers another test situation. The first cooperation of every child happens to be with the mother, and every child leans at first on his mother. There are no reasons for this except that the child experiences the mother as his savior, and he is equipped by nature for cooperation with the mother. You probably know that some ideas exist as for instance that the child is a cannibal and wants to eat his mother. This is not true; nature has fitted the mother to cooperate with the child, and this cooperation is not only necessary for the child, but also for the mother. It is necessary for her to suckle the child. The person with whom a child is always related in the beginning of life is the mother. And this is not sexual libido, but it is a force of nature. Because mother in their social interest for the child usually behave very favorably towards this child, this connection between the two is accomplished easily.

If a girl is really more related to the father, it is always a second phase. This child has turned away from the mother, and there must be some reason why this happened. The reason usually is that this child was discontent with the mother, that she had experienced a tragedy, and has found that the father pampers her. Perhaps he was pampered himself and has been trained since childhood to be kind to girls.

Mothers on the other hand are trained from childhood to be interested in boys, and therefore it is possible, if the mother is kind, amiable, that the boys tend to stay with the mother. It is not a sexual urge, not a sexual libido, which accomplished such things. It is only natural and can be explained in a simple way. But keep this in your mind if you find a child that is more connected with the father than with the mother, that this is always a second phase. It is a result of something that happened, and usually what happened is that the child was tested by a certain situation for which he had not been prepared, namely that a new child was born. This is one of the most dangerous corners in the life of a child, and it can prove whether or not the child at this time is prepared rightly for cooperation.

This can happen very early in the life of a child, at a time when this child has not yet established his style of life. Perhaps after one or two years the child will show how he had been impressed by the arrival of the new child. The results of this impression, and how he answered it, may remain for the rest of his life. We understand that the answers sometimes differ very much, in thousands of ways, but they exist and they can be seen. If a new baby comes after the child is three or four years old, then the style of life of the child answers. You see the difference. Either the style of life is influenced by the arrival of a new child and this style as a result shows it, or if the baby arrives when the child is older, the style of life answers to the situation. Therefore, we can understand that it probably is very important whether one child comes very soon after another. I do not say that this is a bad or unfavorable fact. Sometimes it can be very promising and very favorable. But sometimes, especially if the older child by this time has not learned to cooperate, it makes a great impression on him. Usually these children not prepared for cooperation strongly resist the other child, and regard him as an intruder, as though he did not belong to the family, as though he were a nuisance. This is one of the oldest, one of the first dangerous corners in the life of a child.

Another test which no child can escape is to be connected with strangers, and you can also see as a test the way a child behaves in this situation, whether he runs away and hides, or is arrogant, pushing all other children away, etc. This can be seen especially in school groups, for instance, when a child is to enter a kindergarten or a nursery school. You can see his behavior towards the social problem and you can see whether or not he is fitted for it.

If a child resents the other children of his own family he also shows a lack of social interest. This can be seen in how he behaves, for instance, if another child of the family is hurt, punished or spanked. This also gives a clue for judging this child.

Later comes the school, and with it the problems of comradeship and friendship, and here you can see very clearly the child's social interest.

These dangerous corners are interesting for us not only because they can show something regarding the child, but they also give us a hin

that we should do something for this child. This child cannot pass the test.

I want also to mention that illnesses can be tests. A socially adjusted child does not make much trouble when he is sick. Of course, if he is in pain something must be done, but usually such a child is a good patient. If you find a child who is a bad patient, then you must consider that perhaps this child wants to occupy others, his family, his mother. And there are some illnesses in the case of which a child succeeds in this way, and thus can learn to control his parents. These illnesses are chiefly of such nature that the parents are very much frightened. One of these illnesses is whooping cough, when parents believe the child might choke, which never has happened. Another such illness is encephalitis which is really very dangerous. Another is scarlet fever, because there are some types of scarlet fever for which not much can be done and much uncertainty is involved. Then there is St. Vitus's dance. The aspect of such a child is so terrifying that the parents give in wholly.

Now, it is sure that parents suffer very much when a child is sick and in danger, but they should not show it to the child. The child should not know how scared the parents are, just as you should make it a rule that children should not know in what part of their behavior you are especially interested. You know, there are parents of all kinds. For instance, some parents are very much interested in eating. Their children do not eat at all; they always make trouble in eating. Other parents stress being clean, which is really very important. But if a child is in a state of stubbornness or sullenness, or if he is fighting, he always attacks on the point in which the parents are most interested - in eating, in being clean, in bowel movements, in going to sleep, in being orderly etc. At this point the children counteract. And it is not easy to bring them into a friendly relation, to make them obedient after they have learned to control the parents; because this ability seems to impress children as having arrived at a goal of superiority. They are conquerors. And there is a golden rule for education: never fight children, because children are always stronger, and it is of no use to fight stronger ones.

Now, after dangerous illnesses you find that children have found out that they can control the parents. They have a great feeling of their worth and value without contributing anything. They should not learn this, and it should be avoided. They should know and should learn and experience that their worth and value are dependent upon their contributions. Often in a case history you find that the trouble started after such an illness.

That you really cannot accuse the illness for such failures can be seen in some cases where the children who before an illness had been problem children, afterwards experience a turn for the better and become very good, cooperating, etc. This happens sometimes among children who believe themselves to be neglected in regard to other children. When they are sick they experience the care of the parents which they had not experienced before. For if a child is a failure and a problem child, he thinks he does not have this care and kindness of the parents. But during the illness he has it. And so some children after an illness become very good children.

In school problems of friendship and comradeship arise. Here also appears the problem of interest in school work, interest in the teacher. This means one step forward towards social life, toward preparation for

the later life. Here you can see on the first day when a child enters school; on the last day when he leaves, whether he is really prepared for his later life. I do not say that he must be an outstanding student. He need not be the head of the class, because students at the head of the class are often not rightly socially adjusted. But he must get along, he must understand the importance of school work.

I want also to explain to you as such a test the time of adolescence. Adolescence is not a new thing in the life of a person; it is only another situation in which the child operates with the same fixed style of life, with his own degree of social interest and activity. But he has now more chances, more possibilities, more power, more temptations. And here you can see whether this child was trained for cooperation. You must especially understand that in adolescence nearly every child wants to prove that he is no longer a child. We can see this, but the children always want to prove it. We must stop these efforts to prove this; we must be sure that he is no longer a child in adolescence, and we must behave towards this child as towards an adolescent. We cannot use the same means in handling him, we cannot regard this child in the same way as before. We must recognize his growth and his greater power and possibilities. We must give him a chance. Because it is easier to prove similarity to a grown person by imitating the vices of a grown person, you find very often in adolescence the origin of apparent failures. The symptoms can really arise in adolescence, but the structure of the child's personality was built up in the first childhood. It could have been foreseen, that when this child became an adolescent, he would have a difficult time because he was not socially interested or not active enough.

There are some children who even in adolescence do not want to be grown up. They want to be like babies; They use baby talk; they like to behave like babies, to dress like small children. They do not want to go on, to learn more. There are only a few of these children, but you should know that this is possible. These are children who experienced a very nice time when they were small, and they are afraid of the future. You see, activity is absent; they do not move, they do not want to go ahead. They stop and block themselves against the future.

Later in life you find tests in the problems of social life, how to behave at parties, how to behave toward social life in any way, in regard to friendships, comradeships, interest in the city, interest in elections, interest in mankind. The way in which a person chooses his place in politics can also be understood as a sign of a degree of social interest. But you must be careful in this regard, because especially in politics you find very often that a person belongs to a certain party, but on thorough inquiry and examination you find that he really should belong to another party. He did not understand it.

The question of occupation also tests people later in life, and here are persons who never find their right occupations. They are always discontent. I do not refer to a time of unemployment, to great difficulties imposed from the outside; I mean the great difficulties in the make-up of a person. You find persons who are always choosing another occupation. They jump from one occupation to another, or they start an occupation and after a few days stop it. This does not mean that they have bad luck; it means that these persons are not prepared for occupation. They always find difficulties and faults in every occupation.

A very grilling test for everybody is the test of love and marriage, because in this question the great importance of social interest cannot be overlooked. It is obvious that a person lacking social interest could

never really fall in love. What he means by love is his individual pleasure. But love is a task for two persons, and such a task cannot be accomplished without mutual social interest. Especially in the problem of love, in the problem of marriage, you can see the degree of social interest very clearly, and educators, psychologists, and psychiatrists have to deal very often with the failures which appear as a person is tested on this point. Either the functions are lacking or the relation cannot be accomplished rightly, or else a break occurs very soon.

There is another test which hits everybody and is sometimes a difficult problem. It is old age. Women especially are very often and in a high degree troubled by this problem of old age. Generally not much is done for old age. We do not have the custom of primitive people of exterminating old people, although it has also been proposed in our time. There were primitive tribes, for instance, among whom people at sixty years of age had to climb high trees, and when they were up there, the trees were shaken. Only those people who could stay up there and not fall down and be killed were allowed to live one year longer.

Now, women especially suffer very often because of old age. This is because they do not understand life rightly. Of course, in our culture not much is done for old people. They have much leisure and do not know what to do with it. Or young people do not understand them and shrink away from them. They often experience disappointments. Women especially are frightened because of ignorance. They think if they grow older they will become worthless, which is not true. But any way, you will find many persons who seem to be changed when they are older, and this is mainly due to the fact that they are disappointed and feel futile and useless. They try to prove their worth and value again in the same way as adolescents. They interfere and want to show in many different ways that they are not old and will not be overlooked. Or they become disappointed, depressed, and suffer very often from psychic illnesses, especially from melancholia, and then believe that this comes from the body. But it does not come from the body; it only comes from great disappointment. And we understand that women suffer more who are not trained rightly in social interest, in contribution, but who have believed throughout their lives that beauty and youth are the only advantages of women. Their sufferings in old age show the mistake in this view.

Perhaps I should also mention the loss of property, of possessions, in which case you can also find people breaking down, showing symptoms, proving to be failures. It happens mostly in times of a financial crisis, when many people lose their money, that many of them appear to be sick, suffer from melancholia, commit suicide, or at least change their old attitude, their behavior, and become critical, always afraid of being looked down upon, and therefore hide themselves. Envy and jealousy are increased in these times. It is not as though envy and jealousy originated at this time; it is only that before there was no reason for them. But now a situation for envy and jealousy exists.

These are the remarkable situations which are like dangerous corners for people who are not rightly trained in social interest.