

## Some Adlerian Principles

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Alfred Adler, Sigmund Freud, and Carl Jung were three of the leading thinkers of the first three decades of the twentieth century about people, mental health, and mental illness, and how lives could be improved through human connection and interaction. Each of their points of view represent three separate and distinct views of humankind.

Alfred Adler (1870-1937) and his followers are dedicated to the ideas of social equality and personal freedom and the improvement of humanity as the social responsibility of each generation. Here are several principles of Adlerian psychology:

1. People are social beings who want to contribute and belong first in a family, then in an educational setting, and then in the larger community.
2. People are creative and self-determining decision-makers who are responsible for their own thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.
3. People are subjective in their opinions based on their personal perceptions of self, others, and the world.
4. People are holistic and must be viewed not only through the body-mind connection but also through their cognitions, emotions, and behaviors to understand them and their movement through life.
5. People are goal directed; they are striving to move toward a self-defined and self-created sense of accomplishment, fulfillment, satisfaction, success, or some other goal ultimately to solve five intertwined challenges of living.
6. People encounter three social challenges throughout life: occupation, friendship, and love and two intrapersonal challenges: self-care and self-confidence and the development of spirituality and philosophical values
7. People are looking for ways to be useful and when they cannot be useful, they shift to the useless side of life.
8. People need to be encouraged and to encourage others by focusing on assets, strengths, contributions, effort, and improvement.

9. People need to develop a sense of community connection and community involvement, a concept Adler called *gemeinschaftsgefühl*.

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