

Adler: Style of Life

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The term style of life was used by psychiatrist Alfred Adler as one of several constructs describing the dynamics of the personality.

It reflects the individual's unique, unconscious, and repetitive way of responding to (or avoiding) the main tasks of living: friendship, love, and work. This style, rooted in a childhood prototype, remains consistent throughout life, unless it is changed through depth psychotherapy.

The style of life is reflected in the unity of an individual's way of thinking, feeling, and acting. Often, bending an individual away from the needs of others or common sense, movements are made to relieve inferiority feelings or to compensate for those feelings with an unconscious fictional final goal.

Classical Adlerian psychotherapy attempts to dissolve the archaic style of life and stimulate a more creative approach to living.

Adler felt he could distinguish four primary types of style. Three of them he said to be "mistaken styles".

These include the ruling type: aggressive, dominating people who don't have much social interest or cultural perception; the getting type: dependent people who take rather than give; and the avoiding type: people who try to escape life's problems and take part in not much socially constructive activity. The fourth life style by Adler is the socially useful type: people with a great deal of social interest and activity.