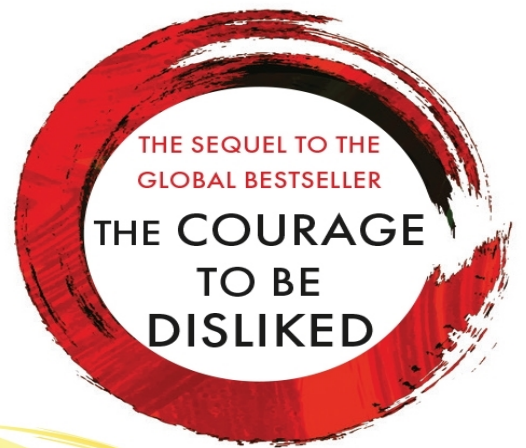


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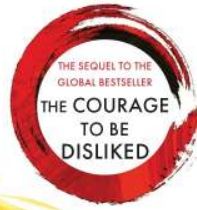


# THE COURAGE TO LIKE YOURSELF

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## AUTHORS' NOTE

Though he stands beside Sigmund Freud and Carl Gustav Jung as one of the most important figures in the world of psychology, Alfred Adler was for many years a forgotten giant. Using the traditional format found in Greek philosophy of a dialogue between a young man and a philosopher, this book provides an introduction to Adler's thought, which is said to be one hundred years ahead of its time.

The characters appearing in the book are a philosopher engaged in the study of Greek philosophy alongside Adlerian psychology and a youth who is pessimistic about his life. In the previous work, *The Courage to be Disliked*, the youth questioned the philosopher on the true meaning of his assertion, based on Adler's ideas, that 'People can change. And not only that, they can find happiness.' The philosopher offered the following statements in response:

'There is no such thing as an internal problem. All problems are interpersonal relationship problems.' 'One must not be afraid of being disliked. Freedom is being disliked by other people.' 'It isn't that you lack competence. You just lack "courage".' 'Neither the past nor the future exist. There is only "here and now".'

The youth rebelled against this stream of radical statements again and again. On encountering Adler's idea of 'community feeling', however, he came to accept the philosopher's words and resolved to change himself.

The setting of this volume is three years later. The youth, who has become a teacher with the intention of putting Adler's ideas into practice, calls on the philosopher once more. *Adlerian psychology is nothing but a bunch of empty theories. You are trying to tempt and corrupt young people with Adler's ideas. I've got to break away from such dangerous ideas.* So says the youth.

In what way should we walk the path to happiness revealed in the preceding volume? Is Adler's thought, which sounds like pure idealism, really a practicable philosophy? And what is the biggest choice in life that Adler arrived at?

This is the conclusion of a two-part work exploring the essence of Alfred Adler and his psychology of courage. Please ascertain for yourself, together with the youth who doubted and revolted against Adler, the true shape of the courage we need.

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**It should have been a more lighthearted and friendly visit. 'I hope you will not mind if, at some point, I visit you here again. Yes, as an irreplaceable friend. And I won't be saying anything more about taking apart your arguments.' Indeed, the youth had blurted out such words on his departure that day. Now, however, three years had gone by and he had arrived at this man's study with completely different intentions. The youth was trembling with the gravity of what he was about to confess, and he felt at a loss as to where to begin.**

## PREAMBLE

PHILOSOPHER: Well, can you tell me what is going on?

YOUTH: You're asking why I have come to visit this study again? Well, unfortunately, I'm not here just to hang out and renew an old friendship. I'm sure you are busy, and my situation, too, is that I have little time for such things. So, naturally, there is a pressing issue that has brought me here again.

PHILOSOPHER: Yes, of course, it would seem so.

YOUTH: I have thought things over. I have worried and obsessed over it all more than is necessary and thought it all completely through. In doing so, I arrived at a very serious resolution and decided to come here to convey it to you. I know you have much to do, so please give me your time for just this one evening. Because this will probably be my final visit.

PHILOSOPHER: What happened?

YOUTH: Haven't you figured it out? It's the problem I've been suffering over for so long: 'Do I give up on Adler or not?'

PHILOSOPHER: Ah. I see.

YOUTH: I'll get right to the point: Adler's ideas are quackery. Utter quackery. Actually, I have to go further and say that they are dangerous, even harmful ideas. While you yourself are certainly free to choose what you wish to adhere to, if possible I'd like to get you to be quiet about it for once and for all. I've resolved to make this my final visit tonight as I've said, in the knowledge that I had to give up on Adler completely, in your presence and with this feeling in my heart.

PHILOSOPHER: So, was there some event that triggered this?

YOUTH: I will talk this through calmly and in an orderly fashion. First, do you recall that final day three years ago, when I last saw you?

PHILOSOPHER: Of course I do. It was a winter's day, with glistening white snow all around.

YOUTH: Yes, it was. The night sky was a beautiful blue, and there was a full moon. Under the influence of Adler's ideas, that day I took a great step forward. I quit my job at the university library and found a teaching position at my old middle school. I thought I'd like to put into practice a kind of education that was based on Adler's ideas and bring it to as many children as possible.

PHILOSOPHER: Isn't that a wonderful decision?

YOUTH: Sure. I was burning with idealism then. I simply couldn't keep such wonderful, world-changing ideas all to myself. I had to get more people to understand them. But whom? I could arrive at only one conclusion. The adults,

who are no longer pure and unsoiled, aren't the ones who need to know about Adler. It's by bringing his thoughts to the children who will build a new generation that his ideas will continue to evolve. That was the mission I had been assigned. The fire inside me was burning so bright, I might well have burned myself.

PHILOSOPHER: I see. You can speak of this only in the past tense?

YOUTH: That's right; it's totally history now. But please don't misunderstand me. I haven't lost hope in my students. And neither have I lost hope or given up with regard to education itself. It's just that I have lost hope in Adler—which is to say, I have lost hope in you.

PHILOSOPHER: Why is that?

YOUTH: Well, that's something for you to contemplate and ask yourself! Adler's ideas have no use in actual society and are nothing more than abstract, empty theories. Especially that education principle that states, 'One must not praise, and one must not rebuke.' And just so you know, I've followed it faithfully. I didn't praise, and I didn't rebuke anyone, either. I didn't give praise for perfect scores on tests or for a thorough job cleaning up. I didn't rebuke anyone for forgetting to do their homework or for being noisy in class. What do you think happened as a result of this?

PHILOSOPHER: You got an unruly classroom?

YOUTH: Completely. But when I think back on it all now, that was only natural. It was my fault for getting taken in by such cheap quackery.

PHILOSOPHER: So, what did you do about it?

YOUTH: Needless to say, for the students who were doing bad things, I chose the path of stern rebuke. I know you're probably going to make light of that and tell me it was a foolish solution. But look, I'm not a person who busies himself with philosophy and gets lost in daydreams. I am an educator who lives, and who handles real, on-the-ground situations, and looks after students' lives and destinies. Because the reality right in front of us never waits—it's moving constantly from moment to moment. You can't just sit back and do nothing!

PHILOSOPHER: How effective is it?

YOUTH: Naturally, if I rebuke them any further, it doesn't do any good. Because they disparage me now—I'm just a softy to them. Honestly, there are even times when I envy the teachers of ages past, when physical punishment was permitted and even standard.

PHILOSOPHER: It's not an easy situation.

YOUTH: True. Just so there isn't any misunderstanding, I should add that I am not letting my emotions take over or getting angry. I'm only rebuking, in a rational manner, as a last resort for the purposes of education. I guess you could say I'm prescribing an antibiotic medicine called 'reprimand'.

PHILOSOPHER: And then you felt you wanted to give up on Adler?

YOUTH: Well, I mentioned that just to give you a clear example. Adler's ideas are certainly wonderful. They shake up your value system and make you feel like the cloudy skies over your head are clearing up; like your life has changed. They would seem to be beyond reproach, a universal truth even. But the fact of the matter is that the only place they hold water is right here, in this study. Once you throw open the door and dive into the actual world, Adler's ideas are just too naïve. The arguments they put forward are quite impractical and nothing but empty idealism. You've just been fabricating a world that suits your purposes here in this room and losing yourself in daydreams. You don't know a thing about the real world and the swarming masses of people who live in it!

PHILOSOPHER: I see . . . And then?

YOUTH: An education in which one neither praises nor rebukes? An education that espouses autonomy and leaves students to fend for themselves? That's nothing other than a renunciation of one's professional duties as an educator. From now on, I am going to face the children in a way that is very different from Adler's. I don't care if it is 'right' or not. Because I have no other choice. I will praise, and I will rebuke. And naturally, I will have to mete out harsh punishment as well.

PHILOSOPHER: Just to confirm, you're not going to quit working as an educator, are you?

YOUTH: Of course not. I will never give up on the path of being an educator. Because it is the path I have chosen. It is not an occupation, but a way of living.

PHILOSOPHER: It is most reassuring to hear that.

YOUTH: So, you think this is just somebody else's problem? If I'm going to continue as an educator, I've got to give up on Adler right here and now! If I don't, I'll be renouncing my responsibilities as an educator and abandoning my students. This is the proverbial blade to your throat. Well, what's your response?

\* \* \*

PHILOSOPHER: First, allow me to make a correction. You used the word 'truth' earlier. But I am not presenting Adler as an absolute, immutable truth. One might say that what I am doing is giving a prescription for eyeglass lenses. I believe there are many people whose fields of vision have been broadened as a result of these lenses. On the other hand, there are probably those who say their vision has become even cloudier than before. I do not consider trying to force these lenses of Adler on such people.

YOUTH: Oh, so you run away from them?

PHILOSOPHER: No. Let's look at it this way. No other form of thought is as easy to get wrong and as hard to get right as Adlerian psychology. The majority of those who say, 'I know Adler' misunderstand his teachings. They do not possess the courage to approach a true understanding, and they do

not try to look directly at the landscape that spreads out beyond this way of thought.

YOUTH: People misunderstand Adler?

PHILOSOPHER: That's right. If someone comes into contact with Adler's ideas and is immediately moved very deeply and says, 'Life is easier now,' that person is grossly misunderstanding Adler. Because when one truly understands what Adler is demanding of us, one is likely to be shocked by its severity.

YOUTH: So, you are saying that I, too, misunderstand Adler?

PHILOSOPHER: Yes, from everything you have been telling me, it would seem so. You are certainly not alone in this, however. There are many Adlerians (practitioners of Adlerian psychology) who misunderstand him at the outset and then climb the stairway of understanding. It would seem that you haven't actually found the stairway that you should climb yet. I didn't find it right away either, when I was young.

YOUTH: Huh. You had a period when you were lost, too?

PHILOSOPHER: Yes, I did.

YOUTH: Then, I want you to teach me. Where is this stairway to understanding, or whatever it is? What do you mean by 'stairway' anyway? Where did you find it?

PHILOSOPHER: I was fortunate. Because I was a househusband in the midst of raising a young child when I

came to know Adler.

YOUTH: What do you mean?

PHILOSOPHER: Through my child, I learned Adler, and, together with my child, I was able to practise and thus deepen my understanding and obtain positive proof of Adler.

YOUTH: So, that's what I'm asking you to tell me! What did you learn? And what is this positive proof you obtained?

PHILOSOPHER: In a word, it was 'love'.

YOUTH: What did you say?

PHILOSOPHER: You don't really need me to say it again, do you?

YOUTH: Ha-ha, what a laugh! Love, the thing that there's no need to speak of? You're saying that if I want to know the real Adler, I have to know about love?

PHILOSOPHER: You who can laugh at this word do not yet understand it. The love Adler speaks of is the harshest and most courage-testing task of all.

YOUTH: Oh, please! You're just going to recite some preachy talk about neighbourly love. I don't want to hear it.

PHILOSOPHER: Just now you stated that you have reached a dead-end in education and have a feeling of distrust for Adler. And then you are eager to tell me that you are

denouncing Adler, and that you don't want me to talk about him anymore, either. Why are you so upset? I suppose you felt that Adler's ideas were something like magic. As if you could just wave a wand and, without further ado, all your wishes would be granted. If that is the case, you *should* give up on Adler. You should give up the mistaken images of Adler that you have embraced and know the real Adler.

YOUTH: No, you're wrong! In the first place, I have never expected Adler to be magical or anything like that. And second, as I think you yourself once said, 'Any person can be happy from this moment onward.'

PHILOSOPHER: Yes, I certainly did say that.

YOUTH: But aren't such words a perfect example of magic? You're warning people, 'Don't be fooled by that counterfeit money,' while pushing other counterfeit money. It's a classic swindler's trick!

PHILOSOPHER: Any person can be happy from this moment onward. This is an undeniable fact, not magic or anything of the sort. You, and everyone else, can take steps towards happiness. But happiness is not something one can enjoy by staying where one is. One has to keep walking along the path one has embarked on. It is necessary to be clear on this point.

You took the first step. You took a big step. Now, however, not only have you lost courage and let your feet come to a halt, you are trying to turn back. Do you know why?

YOUTH: You're saying I don't have patience.

PHILOSOPHER: No. You have not yet made the biggest choice in life. That's all.

YOUTH: The biggest choice in life! What do I have to choose?

PHILOSOPHER: I said it earlier. It is 'love'.

YOUTH: Hah! You expect me to get that? Please don't try to escape into abstraction!

PHILOSOPHER: I am serious. The issues you are now experiencing all stem from the single word 'love'. The issues you have with education, and also the issue of which life you should lead.

YOUTH: All right. This seems like something worth refuting. Now, before we get into a fully-fledged discussion, there is one thing I'd like to say. There is no doubt in my mind that you are a modern-day Socrates. However, it is not his thought that I am referring to, but his crime.

PHILOSOPHER: His crime?

YOUTH: Look, apparently Socrates was sentenced to death on the suspicion of having tempted and corrupted the youth of the ancient Greek city-state of Athens, right? He restrained his disciples, who were appealing to him to escape from prison, and then drank a poison tea and took leave of this world. It's interesting, isn't it? If you ask me, you who espouse the ideas of Adler here in this ancient capital are guilty of exactly the same crime. In other words, you are tempting and corrupting naïve youth with deceitful words!

PHILOSOPHER: You are saying that you were taken in and corrupted by Adler?

YOUTH: That is precisely why I resolved to visit once more to part ways with you. I don't want to create any more victims. Philosophically speaking, I must snuff the life out of you.

PHILOSOPHER: Well, then, it's going to be a long night.

YOUTH: But let's settle this tonight, before daybreak. There is no need for me to keep calling on you after this. Will I climb the stairway of understanding? Or will I tear down that stairway of yours and abandon Adler, once and for all? It'll be one or the other; there's no in-between.

PHILOSOPHER: All right. This may be our last dialogue . . . No, it seems we will have to make it our last, no matter what.

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# PART I

## *That Bad Person and Poor Me*

Little had changed in the philosopher's study since the youth's visit there three years before. A partially written manuscript lay in a loose bundle on the well-used desk. On top of it, perhaps to prevent papers from being blown about by the wind, lay an old-fashioned fountain pen ornamented with gold inlay. It all felt familiar to the youth; it was almost as if he were in his own room. He noticed several books he owned, including one he had just read a week earlier. Gazing wistfully at the bookshelf, which took up an entire wall, the youth let out a great sigh. *I mustn't get too comfortable here. I've got to keep moving forward.*

*Yourself*, I suppose it would have to be this particular comment from Mr Kishimi.

Adlerian psychology addresses all manner of life problems in plain language that can be understood by anyone, without ever making use of obscure terminology of any kind. It is a form of thought endowed with qualities more akin to philosophy than to psychology. It seems to me that *The Courage to be Disliked* was widely accepted as a life philosophy, rather than as a book on psychology.

But on the other hand, doesn't this philosophical quality actually reveal the incompleteness of Adler's thought as a psychology and point to its flaws as a science? Isn't that why Adler became a forgotten giant? Isn't the very fact that it is not complete as a psychology the reason it did not take root in the academic world? I had interacted with Adler's thought without ever ridding myself of such doubts.

And it was that statement of Mr Kishimi's that shed light on them.

Adler did not choose psychology in order to analyse the human mind. Inspired to set off on the path of medicine on the occasion of his younger brother's death, the core matter of his thought was always 'What is happiness to the human being?' And at the beginning of the twentieth century, when Adler was alive, the most advanced approach to learning about human beings, and to inquiring into the true form of happiness, just happened to be psychology. One must not fall under the spell of the name 'Adlerian psychology' or spend too much time comparing him to Freud and Jung. Had Adler been born in ancient Greece, he may well have chosen philosophy, and had Socrates and Plato been born in our time, they might have chosen psychology. As Mr Kishimi often says, 'Adlerian psychology is a way of thinking that follows in the same vein as Greek

philosophy.’ At long last, I feel that I can grasp the meaning of these words.

And so, after a thorough re-reading of Adler’s writings as philosophy texts, I visited Mr Kishimi’s home in Kyoto once again, and we engaged in a lengthy dialogue. Naturally, the main subject of our discussion was happiness theory. It is that question consistently posed by Adler: ‘What is happiness to a human being?’

Our dialogue, which became even more impassioned than the previous time, explored education theory, organisational theory, work theory, social theory and even extended to life theory before reaching its conclusion with the grand themes of ‘love’ and ‘self-reliance’. How will the reader take in the love Adler speaks of and the self-reliance Adler speaks of? If the reader can feel, as I did, a great astonishment and hope of the sort that sends shockwaves through one’s entire life, I would know no greater joy.

Lastly, I would like to convey my heartfelt gratitude to Mr Ichiro Kishimi, who always tackled things head-on as the wisdom-loving philosopher he is, to our editors Yoshifumi Kakiuchi and Diamond Inc.’s Kenji Imaizumi, who gave their steadfast support throughout the lengthy writing period and, most of all, to all our readers.

Thank you very much.

Fumitake Koga

\* \* \*

Alfred Adler, the thinker who was a hundred years ahead of his time.

Since the publication of *The Courage to be Disliked* in 2013, the context of Adler and his thought in our country

has gone through a remarkable transformation. Before, when speaking about Adler in lectures at seminars and universities and the like, it was always necessary to start with, 'One hundred years ago, there was a thinker named Adler.'

Today, however, wherever I go in Japan, there is no need to present him in such a way. Moreover, the questions I receive during question-and-answer sessions are always astute and well-grounded. I have the strong sense that it's no longer 'one hundred years ago, there was a thinker named Adler', and now instead, 'Adler is present' within many people.

This is something I feel also with the first-place standing of *The Courage to be Disliked* for a record-setting fifty-one weeks, having reached million-seller status in South Korea as well as in Japan.

Adler has been widely known in Europe and America for some time. For me, as I have undertaken Adlerian research for many years, there is something deeply moving about his thought now becoming accepted in Asia after the passage of a hundred years.

*The Courage to be Disliked* is a book that is like a kind of map for informing people of the existence of Adlerian psychology and for giving an overview of Adler's ideas. It is a grand map that my co-writer Fumitake Koga and I put together over the course of several years, with the intention of creating a definitive introduction to Adlerian psychology.

This book, *The Courage to Like Yourself*, on the other hand, is a kind of compass for actually putting Adler's ideas into practice and leading a happy life. And it may also be thought of as a collection of behavioural guidelines showing

how one may progress towards the objectives laid out in the first book.

Adler was an oft-misunderstood thinker for many years.

With his encouragement approach in particular, there were innumerable instances of it being presented, or even abused, for purposes that could not be further removed from his original intentions. That is to say, it was used to control and manipulate other people in childrearing and school education settings, as well as in human resource development settings in corporations and the like.

This may be related to the fact that compared to other psychologists of his time, Adler was passionate about education. Deeply interested in socialism while at university, after experiencing the realities of the Russian revolution after World War I, Adler lost hope in Marxism. Thereafter, he sought the salvation of the human race not through political reform, but through educational reform.

One of Adler's greatest achievements was the establishment of numerous child guidance clinics, the first in the world in public schools, under the aegis of the city of Vienna.

Furthermore, he used these child guidance clinics not only for providing treatment to children and their parents, but as places for training teachers, doctors and counsellors. In essence, it was from there that Adlerian psychology spread, from its start in schools, to the world.

To Adler, education was not something on the level of raising scholastic achievement, or reforming problem children, or that sort of thing. It was for moving the human race forward and changing the future. *That* was education to him. Adler goes so far as to declare: 'The teacher moulds the minds of children and holds the future of mankind in his hands.'