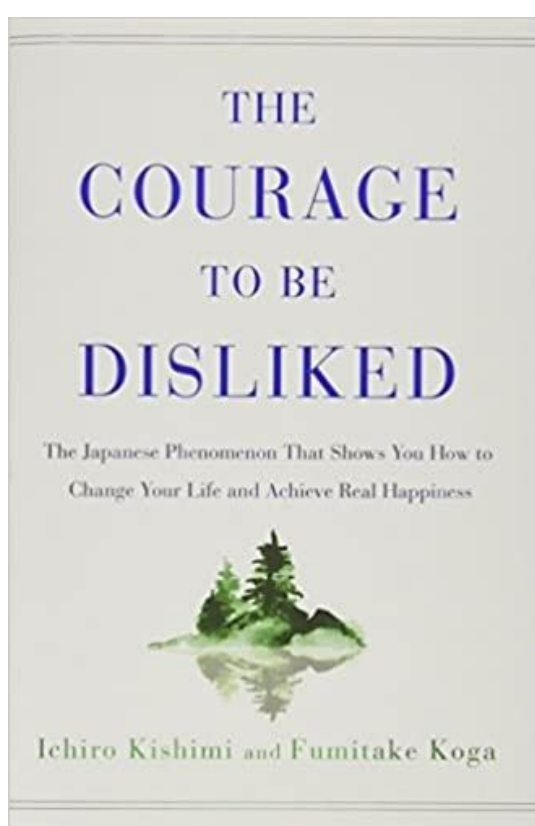


## Favorite Quote:

*“Your unhappiness cannot be blamed on your past or your environment. And it isn’t that you lack competence. You just lack courage. One might say you are lacking in the courage to be happy.”*



**Summary:** The experience of reading *The Courage to Be Disliked* is like time-traveling back to Athens in 420 B.C. to listen to Socrates debate with Plato. . .

Except, instead of ancient Greece we’re in Japan, and instead of Socrates we get [Alfred Adler](#).

You may be wondering: *Who is Alfred Adler?* Fair question. Dr. Alfred Adler was an Austrian psychologist and philosopher who was part of the Sigmund Freud inner circle, along with Carl Jung.

Adler split from the rat pack in 1911 (as Jung later did in 1914) over significant disagreements with Freud, the most notable of which was Adler’s view that:

*“No experience is in itself a cause of our success or failure. We do not suffer from the shock of our experiences—the so-called trauma—but instead we make out of them whatever suits our purposes. We are not determined by our experiences, but the meaning we give them is self-determining.”*

This cornerstone of Adlerian thinking—the complete denial of trauma—is just the first in a barrage of philosophical provocations that will make even the most unflappable reader flap.

Add this uniquely good [264p book](#) to your library, or enjoy the highlights below.

*“Freedom is being disliked by other people.”*

**Ichiro Kishimi**



**Fumitake Koga**



**Alfred Adler**



Two Japanese intellectuals and an Austrian psychologist walk into a book. . .

## Introduction

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This is a very different book. For starters, the entire book is a **dialogue**, and therefore hard to summarize in our usual DBT format.

The dialogue is between a **Philosopher** and **Youth** who remain nameless throughout.

Over the course of five conversations, the philosopher helps his student to understand how each of us is able to determine the trajectory of our own life, free from the shackles of 1) past traumas, and 2) the expectations of others.

Saturated with wisdom, *The Courage to Be Disliked* will guide you through the concepts of self-forgiveness, self-care, and mind decluttering. **It is a deeply liberating way of thinking**, allowing you to develop the courage to change, and ignore the limitations that you might be placing on yourself.

Here are my Kindle notes, [exported](#).

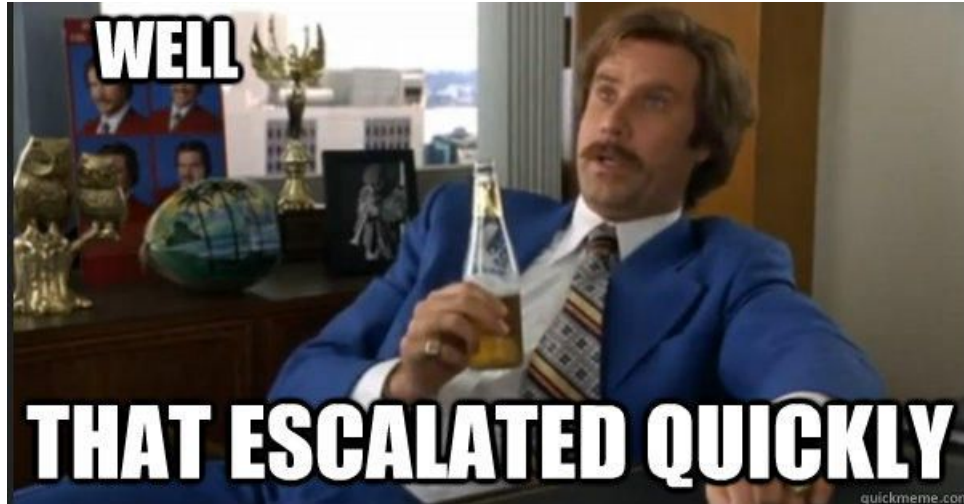
## Basic Principles of Adlerian Psychology

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We must first orient around the basic principles of Adlerian Psychology. While not exhaustive, I'm going to give you the philosophical a la carte menu up front, on behalf of our chef, Dr. Alfred Adler.



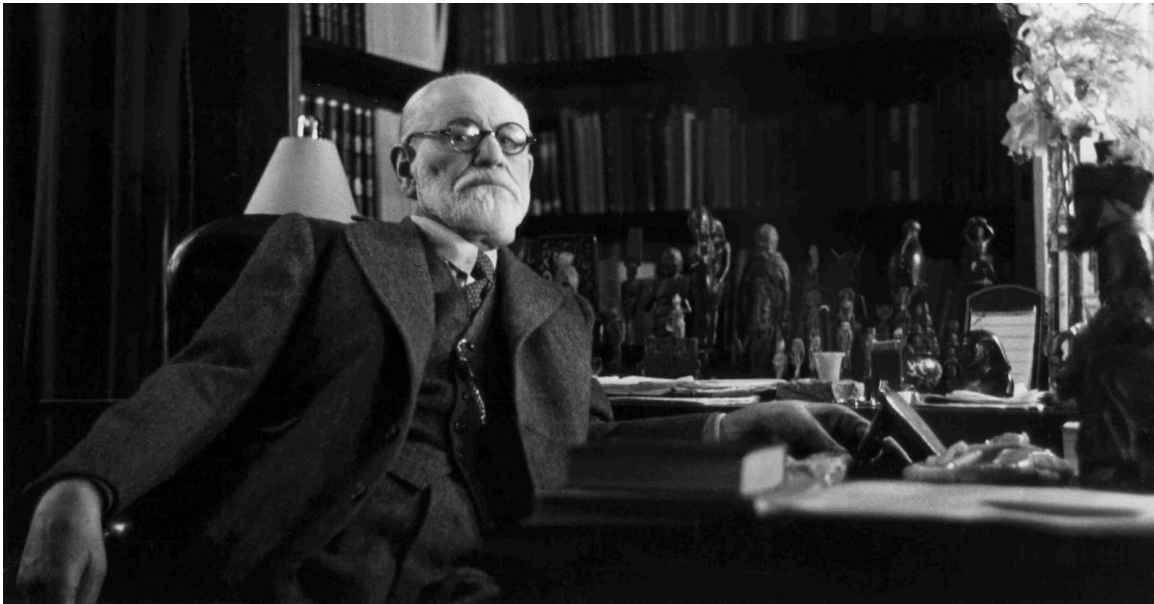
**1. Meaning of life:** “Life in general has no meaning.”



**2. Human objectives for life:** 1) to be self-reliant, and 2) live in harmony with society

**3. Denial of trauma:** “No experience is in itself a cause of our success or failure. We do not suffer from the shock of our experiences—the so-called trauma—but instead we make out of them whatever suits our purposes. We are not determined by our experiences, but the meaning we give them is self-determining.” In short, no more excuses. This is a shot across the bow to Freudian thinking.

Freud: {displeased}



**4. Freedom:** “Freedom is being disliked by other people.” One of the more thought-provoking conversations in the whole book. This one really hit me hard as a recovering people-pleaser.

**5. Courage:** “Your unhappiness cannot be blamed on your past or your environment. And it isn’t that you lack competence. **You just lack courage.** One might say you are lacking in the courage to be happy.” Adlerian psychology is often referred to as the psychology of courage. Pretty awesome.



**6. All relationships should be horizontal, not vertical:** true connection happens among peers, not subordinates and superiors. For this reason, Adler (controversially) also:

**7. Denial of all praise and rebuke:** because they imply judgment; show gratitude instead



**8. Pursuit of superiority:** humans inherently want to grow/improve over time. Adler is well-known for his conception of a “superiority *complex*” which is different but related to this.

**9. Own your tasks:** Adler clearly delineates different types of life tasks: work, friendship, love. Never let anyone intervene in your life tasks, and don't intervene in other's life tasks. Adler is exceptionally clear on task ownership.

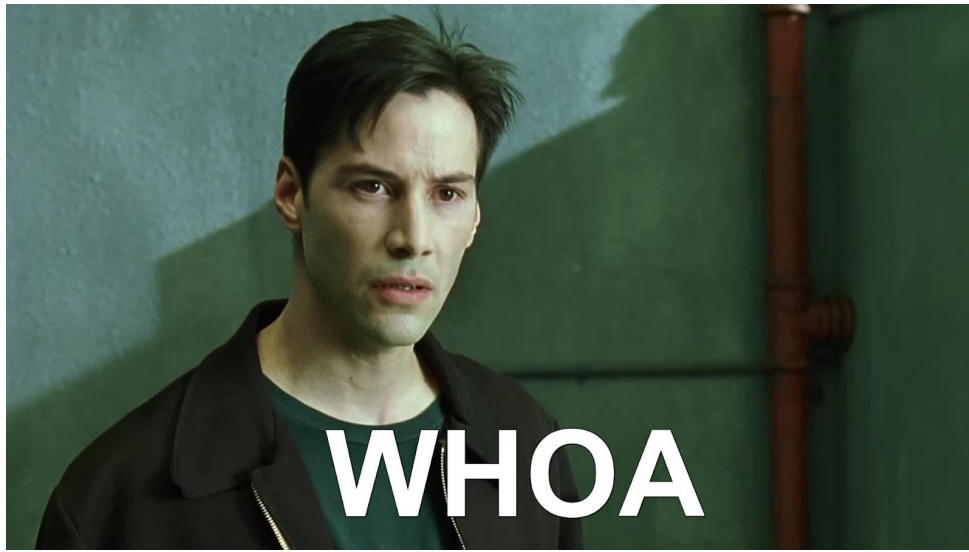
**10. All problems in life are interpersonal problems:** and they stem from our tendency to involve ourselves in other people's tasks, or seek recognition from other people. Perhaps the most emphasized idea, this book really hammers home this fundamental Adlerian principle.

**11. Self-acceptance:** an honest appraisal of reality and what one can change; truth, not affirmations.

**12. Happiness:** what is happiness? Happiness is the feeling of contribution (to a person, or community).

**13. Bias toward action:** “Someone has to start. Other people might not be cooperative, but that is not connected to you. My advice is this: You should start. With no regard to whether others are cooperative or not.” This is just awesome advice on many levels. Something tells me Adler was *not* a procrastinator.

**14. The past has no meaning:**



**15. What is the greatest “life lie”?** The greatest life lie is *not living in the present*, and letting the past and future hijack our consciousness. I honestly didn’t see this coming from a conservative Austrian doctor, but yeah: Adler embraced mindfulness and ferociously protected the present from attacks from the past and future. Powerful.



In closing, I offer you Adler’s life advice:

*No matter what moments you are living, or if there are people who dislike you, as long as you do not lose sight of the guiding star of “**I contribute to others.**” you will not lose your way, and you can do whatever you like. Whether you’re disliked or not, you pay it no mind and live free.*