

criticize others partly out of an unhealthy belief that I have to compete with them. If I can make them look unknowing, then perhaps I'll appear more knowing. But I don't want to compete — not for status, acceptance, love, or for anything else. I don't grow well in a competitive situation; instead, I flourish in a supportive, nourishing environment. In this respect I am much like a plant. If it has to struggle with other plants for sunshine, water, and minerals it will grow up distorted and stunted, never to develop much of its potential. But given lots of room to grow, sunshine and nutrients, and, most important, tenderness in how it is handled, it surges forth. Are people any different?

Further, I want to learn to live more comfortably and expectantly with tentativeness, uncertainty, and change. I want to be more responsive to the now, and not continue to be attached too deeply to either the past or the future. All I have is the now. I keep avoiding the now so much. As I avoid it, it becomes the past and is no longer available to me. In the meantime part of the future has become the present, and I'm not in it either! Where am I?

What will I be doing five years from now, or in 1984? I don't know, and don't really want to. Job labels and job descriptions seem unimportant to me. But sharing, caring, being, relating — these do seem important. I could well be even more confused five years from now, but I hope I will be experiencing and accepting my confusions better by then. Will you come walk with me in the fog?

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## THE COUNSELLING SIDE OF FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION: TRENDS AND TREATMENT IN THE 1970'S

If guidance and counselling develop to meet new needs, advances in the next five years will include increased activity in what is now called family life education, on the part of counsellors as well as teachers. Family life education is taken here to mean a developmental program aiming at the improvement of relationships between children and their parents, between siblings in a family, between boys and girls, between husbands and wives, and between the next generation of parents and their children. It interrelates the physical, emotional, social, and moral aspects of sexuality which matter to so many of these relationships. It deals with facts, attitudes, values, decisions, and behavior. Foundations of fact and understanding may well be laid by teachers, as more and better family life education courses are introduced. The facilitation of students' decisions, choices, adjustments, and relationships will be the business of counsellors.

Present trends indicate a growing need for attention to the relationships within present families, the relationships between boys and girls which often culminate in the establishment of a new family, and the relationships within these new families which contribute to their success. The trends evident in today's society include a rapid increase in abortions, illegitimate births, divorces, and unhappy families, all indications of family instability, and at the same time a yearning for honest, warm, close, human relationships such as are found in successful families. One of the strains on family solidarity is a geographic mobility, unlikely to diminish, which fragments the extended family and turns the nuclear family in upon itself, thrusting at it problems of intimacy with which it is often unready to cope. Another strain is the increasing emancipation of both women and youth, calling for an adjustment in the traditional pattern of paternal authority. And while youth are increasingly reluctant to rely on conventionality, tradition, and parental precept to guide their decisions, and are asserting at an earlier age their right to find their own values and make their own decisions, at the same time they are confronted by a vastly extended and often bewildering variety of alternatives from which to choose. These alternatives are multiplying, not only in terms of educational and career opportunities, places to go and pleasures to enjoy, but also in terms of alternatives to the traditional masculine and feminine roles and relationships. What were very recently considered almost unspeakable deviations from socially sanctioned male-female behavior are now treated openly as viable alternatives.

The responses of adolescents to the confusion of social change seem to group themselves into four main trends. One is to escape, to withdraw from orthodox society, and to find a way of life free of responsibility, often involving vagrant migration and resort to drugs or alcohol. Another is to conform to the expectations of the orthodox establishment, to strive and to achieve according to its terms. A third is to fight the system, rebel, attack, attempt to tear down and destroy, often with no realistic concept of what to build on the ruins. A fourth trend is the search for truth, the embrace of human values, and the mobilization of energy for the alleviation of suffering and the construction of a better world. Reflection leads to the conclusion that these trends are not entirely discrete. In any adolescent group or individual, one trend may predominate but traces of the other three can probably also be seen, so that to some degree all young people have problems of adjusting to the stress of change, and all have something of a positive approach to build on.

How can teaching and counselling in the area of family life education contribute to an alleviation of the confusion and stress brought on by the turmoil of social change? It can beam the light of truth, or at least an honest search for truth, on areas of life too long left in the dark. It can fill many of the knowledge gaps and promote honest and sensitive inquiry in the realm of sexuality. It can help boys and girls to discover and evaluate the alternatives open to them in ways of relating to their parents, their siblings, their partners of the opposite

sex, their future children. It can help them find themselves through relating successfully to others, particularly those others who are closest to them, in their families.

The goal of every human being is to have the deep conviction that he is a person of worth, that the others who matter to him see him as a person of worth, that he belongs, that he has a place in the world. To reach this goal he must be a social being, and he must be concerned about others. In his pursuit of this goal he may be encouraged or discouraged, especially by those who are closest to him. If he is encouraged, he responds with social interest in return. If he is discouraged, he responds with mistaken attempts to establish himself — by attention seeking, struggling for power, seeking revenge, or by a frustrating rejection of all demands made upon him. Whether he is encouraged or discouraged, he responds to actions more than to words, because he senses that what people do tells more than what they say. He resists tyranny, and when he is treated with democratic fairness he responds with fairness, because he wants to belong. He is willing to accept responsibility for what is in his power to do, if he is trusted with that responsibility. He is an integrated whole, as a person, and not a bundle of contradictory traits. He is not subject to the predestination of his genealogy and experiential conditioning, but is to a very substantial degree the master of his own fate. His life style, when it is understood, reveals his way of striving for the goal of being someone.

This concept of man, and a consequent approach to counselling, were developed by Alfred Adler and refined by Rudolf Dreikurs. The insight into goals, the faith in democracy, and the awareness of the effects of encouragement and discouragement by "meaningful others," all characteristic of the Adlerian interpretation, make it particularly appropriate for helping families to realize their potential, and through successful family relationships helping individuals to reach fulfilment. An adolescent who feels that he is respected as a person of worth by his family is unlikely to withdraw from society, merely conform, or rebel, and he has a much better chance of finding his way responsibly through the confusion of social change.

If guidance and counselling are to meet the needs of the next five years, they will give more attention to family relationships, and counsellors will acquire expertise in facilitating the improvement of these relationships, the Adlerian approach being one of the most promising.

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