

THE COURAGE TO BE DISLIKED: THE JAPANESE
PHENOMENON THAT SHOWS YOU HOW TO
CHANGE YOUR LIFE AND ACHIEVE REAL
HAPPINESS By Ichiro Kishimi and Fumitake Koga

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Conclusion INTRODUCTION "The Courage to Be Disliked" presents Alfred Adler's psychology through a Socratic dialogue between a philosopher and a young man.

The book challenges fundamental assumptions about happiness, freedom, and human relationships.

The central message is radical: you can be happy right now, regardless of your past.

Happiness is a choice, not a result of circumstances.

But achieving it requires courage—specifically, the courage to be disliked.

The book is structured as five nights of conversation, each

addressing core Adlerian principles: 1.

Your past doesn't determine your present 2.

All problems are interpersonal 3.

Separate your tasks from others' 4.

You are the center of your world 5.

Live in the present moment Adlerian psychology differs from Freudian psychology:

- Freud focuses on causes (past trauma)
- Adler focuses on goals (present purposes)
- Freud sees people as determined by past
- Adler sees people as free to choose

The book's title captures its essence: true freedom requires accepting that some people won't like you.

Trying to please everyone is a prison.

The courage to be disliked is the courage to be free.

This book matters because it:

- Offers a path to immediate happiness

- Frees you from your past
- Simplifies complex relationships
- Provides practical tools
- Challenges conventional wisdom

THE FIRST NIGHT: DENY TRAUMA The Conversation Begins A young man visits a philosopher, skeptical that anyone can be happy.

The philosopher claims that anyone can be happy, right now, regardless of circumstances.

The young man is incredulous.

What about trauma?

What about difficult childhoods?

What about circumstances beyond our control?

The philosopher introduces Adlerian psychology's first radical claim: trauma doesn't exist.

Denying Trauma Adler's Claim: - No experience is in itself a cause of our success or failure - We determine our own lives by the meaning we give to experiences -

Trauma is a story we tell ourselves - We choose to be affected by past events This doesn't mean bad things didn't happen.

It means: - The past doesn't determine the present - You choose how past events affect you - You can change the meaning you assign - You're not a victim of your history

The Purpose of Emotions Adler taught that emotions serve purposes: - Anger serves the purpose of dominating others - Anxiety serves the purpose of avoiding challenges -

Depression serves the purpose of getting attention We create emotions to achieve goals.

This is "teleology"—focus on purpose rather than cause.

Example: - Freudian view: "I'm angry because he insulted me" (cause) - Adlerian view: "I used anger to dominate him" (purpose)

This is empowering: if you create emotions for purposes, you can choose different purposes and different emotions.

People Fabricate Anger The philosopher gives an example: a mother yells at her daughter, then calmly answers the phone, then resumes yelling.

This shows: - Anger isn't uncontrollable - It's created for a purpose - It can be turned on and off - We choose to be

angry The purpose of the mother's anger: to make the daughter submit through volume and emotion.

Trauma Doesn't Exist The philosopher's radical claim: trauma is a story we tell ourselves to avoid change.

Example: - "I can't have relationships because of past abuse" (trauma story) - Reality: "I don't want to risk rejection, so I use past abuse as excuse" (purpose) This isn't blaming victims.

It's recognizing: - The past happened - But it doesn't determine the present - You choose how it affects you - You can change that choice People Are Not Determined by Their Past Adler's liberating message: - You're not determined by past experiences - You're not a victim of your history - You can change at any moment - The past is irrelevant to present choices This creates radical

freedom and responsibility.

Your Life Is Decided Here and Now

The philosopher emphasizes:

- Your life is determined by what you choose now

- Not by what happened in the past
- You can change at any moment
- The power is in the present

The young man struggles with this.

If trauma doesn't exist, why do people suffer?

The philosopher explains: people suffer because they choose to.

They use past events as excuses to avoid the challenges of change.

The Courage to Change

Change requires courage because:

- It means giving up excuses - It means taking responsibility - It means facing challenges - It means risking failure Most people prefer the familiar unhappiness to the unknown of change.

Lifestyle Adler used "lifestyle" to mean the worldview and patterns you've chosen: - How you see yourself - How you see others - How you see the world - Your habitual patterns Your lifestyle is chosen, not determined.

And what's chosen can be changed.

THE SECOND NIGHT: ALL PROBLEMS ARE
INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP PROBLEMS The Young Man Returns The young man returns, still skeptical.

He's tried to change but failed.

The philosopher explains that change is difficult because all problems are interpersonal.

All Problems Are Interpersonal Adler's claim: all problems are interpersonal relationship problems.

Examples: - Loneliness is an interpersonal problem (wanting connection) - Low self-esteem is interpersonal (comparing yourself to others) - Anxiety is interpersonal (worrying about others' judgments)

- Depression is interpersonal (seeking attention or avoiding expectations) Even seemingly individual problems have interpersonal roots.

Feelings of Inferiority Everyone has feelings of inferiority.

This is normal and can be motivating.

The problem isn't inferiority feelings—it's the inferiority complex.

Inferiority Complex:

- Using feelings of inferiority as excuse
- "I can't succeed because I'm not smart enough"
- "I can't have relationships because I'm not attractive enough"
- Making inferiority an excuse for not trying

This is different from healthy inferiority feelings that motivate improvement.

Superiority Complex

Some people develop a superiority complex:

- Acting superior to hide inferiority
- Bragging and boasting
- Putting others down
- Needing to feel better than others

This is actually a sign of deep inferiority feelings.

Life Is Not a Competition

The philosopher explains that life is not a competition:

- You don't need to be better than

others - Others' success doesn't diminish you -

Comparison creates suffering - Cooperation is better than

competition When you see life as competition: - Others

are enemies or obstacles - Their success threatens you -

You can't celebrate with them - You're always anxious

about your standing When you see life as cooperation: -

Others are companions

- Their success is inspiring - You can celebrate with them

- You feel secure You're the Only One Who Can Change

Yourself The philosopher emphasizes: - You can't change

others - You can only change yourself - Trying to change

others creates conflict - Focus on your own choices This

is liberating: you're not responsible for changing others,

only yourself.

THE THIRD NIGHT: DISCARD OTHER PEOPLE'S

TASKS The Separation of Tasks Adler's most practical concept: separation of tasks.

The Principle: - Every task belongs to someone - Identify whose task it is - Don't interfere in others' tasks - Don't let others interfere in yours How to Identify Whose Task: - Ask: "Who ultimately bears the consequences?"

" - That person owns the task Examples: - Studying is the child's task (they bear consequences) - Whether someone likes you is their task (they bear consequences) - Your career choice is your task (you bear consequences)

Discard Other People's Tasks The philosopher advises: discard other people's tasks.

This means: - Don't try to control others' opinions - Don't try to make others like you - Don't take responsibility for others' feelings - Don't interfere in their choices

This creates freedom and reduces conflict.

What Others Think of You Is Their Task The young man asks: "But don't we need others to like us?

" The philosopher responds: - Whether someone likes you is their task - You can't control it - Trying to control it creates suffering - Focus on your own tasks This is the courage to be disliked: - Accept that some people won't like you - Don't try to please everyone - Live according to your values - Let others have their opinions Cutting the Gordian Knot The separation of tasks cuts through interpersonal problems like Alexander cutting the Gordian knot.

Most interpersonal problems come from: - Interfering in others' tasks - Letting others interfere in yours -

Confusion about whose task is whose Separating tasks solves these problems.

Desire for Recognition The young man asks: "Don't we need recognition from others?

" The philosopher explains that desire for recognition is a trap: - It makes you live for others - It prevents authentic living - It creates dependence - It's a form of self-centeredness Living for others' recognition means: - You're not free - You're controlled by their opinions

- You can't be yourself - You're always anxious Freedom Is Being Disliked by Other People The philosopher's radical claim: - Freedom means some people will dislike you - If everyone likes you, you're not being yourself - You're living for their approval - True freedom requires

courage to be disliked This doesn't mean being disagreeable.

It means: - Living according to your values - Not seeking universal approval - Accepting that some won't like you - Being authentic anyway Do Not Rebuke or Praise Adler taught: don't rebuke or praise.

Why Not Rebuke: - It's interfering in others' tasks - It assumes you're superior - It creates vertical relationships - It damages connection Why Not Praise: - It also assumes superiority - It creates dependence on approval - It's manipulative - It prevents intrinsic motivation Instead: encourage and appreciate as equals.

THE FOURTH NIGHT: WHERE THE CENTER OF THE WORLD IS Community Feeling Adler's concept of "community feeling" (Gemeinschaftsgefühl): - Sense of

belonging to community - Seeing others as companions - Contributing to the whole - Finding your place

This is essential for happiness.

You Are Not the Center of the World The philosopher explains: - You're not the center of the world - But you are the center of your world - Others are the center of their worlds - Everyone is equal This creates: - Humility (you're not the center) - Confidence (you're the center of your world) - Respect for others (they're centers of their worlds) Listen to the Voice of a Larger Community Don't limit your community to immediate relationships: - Expand to larger communities - Humanity as a whole - The universe - This provides perspective When you see yourself as part of larger community: - Small problems shrink - You find your place - You contribute

meaningfully - You feel connected Do Not Rebuke or Praise The philosopher reiterates: relate to others as equals.

Vertical Relationships: - Superior/inferior - Parent/child - Teacher/student - Boss/employee Horizontal Relationships: - Equal to equal - Companion to companion - Mutual respect

- Cooperation Vertical relationships create: - Competition - Resentment - Dependence - Conflict Horizontal relationships create: - Cooperation - Respect - Independence - Harmony Encouragement Instead of praise or rebuke, offer encouragement: - Acknowledge effort - Express gratitude - Show appreciation - Support as equal Encouragement: - Doesn't assume superiority - Builds intrinsic motivation - Creates horizontal

relationships - Fosters growth How to Feel You Have Value The young man asks: "How do I feel I have value?"

" The philosopher responds: - By contributing to others - By being useful to community - By giving, not taking - By participating Value comes from contribution, not from being praised or recognized.

Work Is a Series of Tasks for the Community The philosopher explains that work is contribution: - Not just for money

- But for contributing to community - For being useful - For participating in society This gives work meaning beyond paycheck.

Young People Walk Ahead The philosopher challenges the young man: - Don't wait for others to change - You walk

ahead - Be the change - Others will follow or not You can't control whether others change.

You can only change yourself and walk your path.

THE FIFTH NIGHT: TO LIVE IN EARNEST IN THE HERE AND NOW Excessive Self-Consciousness The young man is still struggling.

The philosopher identifies the problem: excessive self-consciousness.

Self-Consciousness: - Worrying about how you appear - Focusing on yourself - Concerned with others' judgments - Self-centered The solution: focus on others, not yourself.

Not Self-Affirmation but Self-Acceptance The philosopher distinguishes: Self-Affirmation: - "I can do it" - Lying to yourself - Denying reality - Unsustainable

Self-Acceptance: - "This is me" - Accepting reality

- Working with what is - Sustainable Self-acceptance
doesn't mean resignation: - Accept what you cannot
change - Work to change what you can - Know the
difference

The Difference Between Trust and Confidence

Trust: - Unconditional - No conditions or guarantees -

Given freely - Basis for relationships Confidence: -

Conditional - Based on evidence - Requires proof -

Transactional The philosopher advocates trust: - Trust

others unconditionally - Don't require proof - Accept risk

of betrayal - This creates genuine relationships The

Essence of Work Is Contribution to Others The

philosopher returns to contribution: - Work is contribution

- Relationships are contribution - Life is contribution -

Happiness comes from contributing Three Types of

Contribution: 1.

Work tasks 2.

Friendship tasks 3.

Love tasks All involve contributing to others.

Young People Should Not Be Made to Walk Ahead

The philosopher clarifies earlier statement: - Young people shouldn't be forced ahead - But they can choose to walk ahead - Leadership is a choice - Not an obligation You can choose to be the change without requiring others to follow.

Workaholism Is a Life-Lie The young man asks about work-life balance.

The philosopher explains workaholism is a "life-lie": -
Excuse to avoid other life tasks - Particularly friendship
and love - Hiding in work - Avoiding intimacy True
contribution includes all three tasks: work, friendship,
love.

From the Psychology of Possession to the Psychology of
Practice The philosopher distinguishes: Psychology of
Possession: - Focus on what you have - Achievements -
Status - Possessions Psychology of Practice: - Focus on
what you do - Process - Contribution - Experience
Happiness comes from practice, not possession.

Living in the Here and Now The philosopher's final
teaching: - Don't live in past or future - Live in the
present moment

- This moment is all you have - Make it meaningful The Meaning of Life The young man asks about life's meaning.

The philosopher responds: - Life has no general meaning

- You give your life meaning - Through your choices - Through your contributions Your life's meaning is what you make it.

The Greatest Life-Lie The greatest life-lie is: - "I'll be happy when..."

" - "I'll start living when..."

" - Postponing life - Waiting for conditions The truth: - Life is now - Happiness is now - Start living now - Don't postpone Dance Like No One Is Watching The philosopher uses a metaphor: - Life is like dancing - The

point isn't to reach a destination - It's the dance itself -

Each moment is complete Live each moment fully, not as means to an end.

ADLERIAN PSYCHOLOGY CORE PRINCIPLES

Teleology vs.

Etiology Etiology (Freud):

- Focus on causes - Past determines present - Trauma explains behavior - You're a victim of history Teleology (Adler): - Focus on purposes - Present goals determine behavior - You choose how past affects you - You're responsible for choices Adler's approach is empowering: you're not determined by past, you choose your present.

Separation of Tasks Every task belongs to someone: -

Identify whose task it is - Don't interfere in others' tasks -

Don't let others interfere in yours - This creates freedom and reduces conflict Community Feeling Sense of belonging and contribution: - See others as companions - Contribute to community - Find your place - This creates happiness Horizontal Relationships Relate to others as equals: - Not superior/inferior - But companion to companion - Mutual respect - Cooperation This creates healthy relationships.

Courage to Be Disliked True freedom requires: - Living according to your values - Not seeking universal approval
- Accepting some won't like you - Being authentic anyway
This is the courage to be free.

Living in the Present Focus on now: - Not past or future - This moment is all you have - Make it meaningful - Don't

postpone life Contribution Happiness comes from: -

Contributing to others - Being useful - Giving, not taking

- Participating in community HOW TO APPLY THIS

BOOK IN YOUR LIFE Daily Practices Morning

Intention Each morning: - Focus on today only - Not past or future - Set intention to contribute - Choose your attitude This grounds you in the present.

Evening Reflection Each evening: - How did I contribute today?

- Did I live in the present?

- Did I separate tasks appropriately?

- What will I do differently tomorrow?

This builds awareness and improvement.

Applying Separation of Tasks Identify Tasks For any situation, ask:

- Whose task is this?

- Who bears the consequences?

- Is this my task or theirs?

Common Confusions:

- Others' opinions of you (their task)
- Your children's choices (their task)
- Your career (your task)
- Others' feelings (their task)

Practice Separation

When you identify others' tasks:

- Don't interfere
- Don't try to control
- Let them handle it

When others interfere in your tasks:

- Focus on your tasks
- Politely decline their interference
- Make your own choices
- Accept consequences
- Maintain boundaries

Building Community Feeling Shift Perspective From:

- "What can I get?"

" - "How do I look?

" - "Am I better than others?

" To: - "What can I contribute?

" - "How can I help?

" - "How can we cooperate?

"

This shift creates community feeling.

Daily Contribution Each day, contribute: - Help someone
- Do your work well - Be kind - Participate in community
Small contributions matter.

Creating Horizontal Relationships Eliminate Vertical
Language Stop: - Praising (assumes superiority) -

Rebuking (assumes superiority) - Comparing (creates hierarchy) Start: - Encouraging (as equal) - Appreciating (as equal) - Cooperating (as equal) Practice

Encouragement Instead of praise: - "You did it!"

" (not "I'm proud of you") - "Thank you" (not "Good job")
- "How do you feel?"

" (not "I'm impressed") This creates horizontal relationships.

Developing Courage to Be Disliked Accept Disapproval
Practice: - Make choices based on your values - Accept some won't approve - Don't seek universal approval - Be authentic anyway

Start Small: - Express an unpopular opinion - Make a choice others disagree with - Set a boundary - Say no

Build courage gradually.

Live Your Values Identify your values: - What matters to you?

- What do you stand for?

- What's non-negotiable?

Live them: - Make choices aligned with values - Even

when others disapprove - Even when it's difficult -

Consistently Living in the Present Present Moment

Practice Throughout the day: - Notice when you're in past

or future - Bring attention to present - Focus on what

you're doing now - Be fully here Techniques: - Deep

breathing - Sensory awareness - Mindfulness - Focusing

on current task Stop Postponing Notice when you think: -

"I'll be happy when..."

" - "I'll start when..."

" - "After this, then..."

"

Replace with: - "I can be happy now" - "I can start now"

- "This moment matters" Specific Applications In Relationships Separate Tasks: - Their feelings are their task - Your feelings are your task - Don't try to control their feelings - Don't let them control yours Build

Horizontal Relationships: - Relate as equals - Encourage, don't praise - Cooperate, don't compete - Respect boundaries Contribute: - How can you help?

- What can you give?

- How can you support?

At Work Separate Tasks: - Your work is your task -
Others' opinions are their task - Do your best - Let go of
results Contribute: - How does your work help others?

- What value do you create?

- How do you serve?

Build Horizontal Relationships: - Relate to colleagues as
equals - Cooperate, don't compete - Encourage others

- Appreciate contributions With Family Separate Tasks: -
Children's choices are their tasks - Parents' opinions are
their tasks - Respect boundaries - Don't interfere
inappropriately Build Horizontal Relationships: - Respect
children as equals - Encourage, don't praise or rebuke -
Support their choices - Trust them Contribute: - How can
you help?

- What can you give?
- How can you support growth?

Personal Growth Accept Yourself: - This is who you are - Accept what you cannot change - Work on what you can - Be realistic Focus on Contribution: - How can you be useful?

- What can you give?
- How can you participate?

Live in Present: - Focus on now - Don't postpone life - Make this moment meaningful - Dance, don't march

Long-Term Integration Month One: Separation of Tasks

Focus on: - Identifying whose task is whose - Not interfering in others' tasks - Not letting others interfere in

yours - Building this habit Month Two: Community

Feeling Focus on: - Shifting from taking to giving -

Contributing daily - Seeing others as companions -

Building belonging Month Three: Horizontal

Relationships Focus on: - Relating as equals -

Encouraging, not praising - Cooperating, not competing -

Building mutual respect Month Four: Courage to Be

Disliked Focus on: - Living your values - Accepting

disapproval - Being authentic - Building courage Month

Five: Living in Present Focus on: - Being here now - Not

postponing life - Making each moment meaningful -

Dancing through life Month Six and Beyond: Integration

All principles become natural: - Automatic separation of

tasks - Natural contribution - Horizontal relationships

- Courage to be authentic - Present-moment living

CONCLUSION "The Courage to Be Disliked" offers a radical path to freedom and happiness.

Through Adlerian psychology, it shows that you can be happy right now, regardless of your past or circumstances.

Key Takeaways Your Past Doesn't Determine Your Present

- Trauma is a story you tell yourself - You choose how past affects you - You can change at any moment - The power is in the present
- All Problems Are Interpersonal - All problems involve relationships - Comparison creates suffering - Life is cooperation, not competition - Others are companions, not competitors
- Separate Tasks - Every task belongs to someone - Don't interfere in others' tasks - Don't let others interfere in yours - This creates freedom
- The Courage to Be Disliked - True freedom requires accepting disapproval - You can't please everyone - Live

according to your values - Be authentic anyway Live in the Present - This moment is all you have - Don't postpone life - Make now meaningful - Dance, don't march

The Transformative Power This book transforms lives because it: - Frees you from your past - Simplifies relationships - Provides practical tools - Offers immediate path to happiness - Requires only courage The Journey Ahead Applying these principles is ongoing: - Start with separation of tasks - Build community feeling - Create horizontal relationships - Develop courage to be disliked - Live in the present Each day is practice.

The Ripple Effect When you live these principles, you inspire others: - Your authenticity gives others permission - Your courage encourages others - Your contribution

inspires contribution - Your freedom shows what's possible Your example matters.

Final Thoughts Happiness is not something you achieve in the future.

It's something you choose in the present.

Freedom is not the absence of constraints.

It's the courage to be yourself despite disapproval.

Meaning is not something you find.

It's something you create through contribution.

Life is not a journey to a destination.

It's a dance to be enjoyed now.

You have everything you need to be happy right now.

The only question is: do you have the courage?

The courage to: - Let go of your past - Separate tasks - Build horizontal relationships - Be disliked - Live in the present - Contribute - Be yourself

The Beginning This isn't the end—it's the beginning of your freedom.

You now understand: - Your past doesn't determine you - You can separate tasks - You can build community feeling - You can be disliked - You can live in the present

The question isn't whether this works.

It does—proven through Adlerian psychology.

The question is: do you have the courage?

Start today: - Separate one task - Make one contribution - Build one horizontal relationship - Accept one disapproval - Live one moment fully

Moment by moment, choice by

choice, you'll become free.

And freedom will transform your life.

Welcome to your courage.