# Alfred Adler(1870-1937) : Individual Psychology

- Biographical Sketch

-Miserable childhood.

-Major rivalry with his older brother.

-First specialized in ophthalmology (diseases of the eye) and later shifted to psychiatry.

-He joined Vienna Psychoanalytic Society in 1902.

-Became president of the society in 1910 & resigned in 1911.

# View of Human Nature

*A Person's Perceptions are based on His or Her View of Reality (Phenomenology)*

- Adler believed that we "construct" our reality according to our own way of looking at the world*.

- "I am convinced that a person's behavior springs from this idea…because our senses do not see the world, we apprehend it." (Adler, 1933/1964)

\* A lay perception : (जाकी रही भावना जैसी प्रभु मूरत देखी तिन तैसी)

# Individual Psychology

- Freud ignored questions concerning life's meaning and the effects of future aspirations one's life.

- Positive relationships among humans.

- Emphasized wholes and not parts (Gestalt Psychology)

Organ inferiority and compensation

-Biological deficiencies cause problems.

-It is compensated.

-Sometime overcompensated.

-So firstly, he emphasized biological inferiority compensation & overcompensation

*Feelings of inferiority

-In 1910 he shifted his emphasis from actual organ inferiority to subjective inferiority.

-Compensation or overcompensation directed toward either real or imagined inferiority.

-All humans are bisexual.

• Masculine protest: strong, aggressive

• feminine : weak, passive, or dependent

-Emphasized on cultural gender differences

• Inferiority complex: A condition that develops when a person is unable to compensate for normal inferiority feelings.

• Striving for superiority: The urge toward perfection or completion that motivates each of us.

• Superiority complex: A condition that develops when a person overcompensates for normal inferiority feelings.

# Feelings of Inferiority as Motivational

-Stimulates neurosis or a need to succeed

- Striving for Superiority

-Fundamental fact of life

-Master motive in his theory

-Beneficial or harmful

-Superiority complex- overcompensation for these feelings can result in a superiority complex.

e.g. domineering, boastful, arrogant and degrading others.

**Examples of a Superiority Complex**

- Belittling or dismissing other people's opinions and contributions

- Competing for attention and admiration

- Behaving condescendingly toward others they deem inferior

- Lifestyle
- -Crystallized by the age of 4 or 5.
- -Importance of perception
- Fictional Finalism is a central concept within the idea of striving for superiority, referring to the idea that individuals are motivated by fictional goals or ideals, which they strive toward throughout life. These fictions are not "false" in the literal sense but serve as subjective guiding principles.
- Fictional Goals: Based in subjective reality & future oriented
- Social interest: It refers to an individual's capacity for cooperation and empathy towards others and society.
- -Three major tasks in life
- occupational tasks
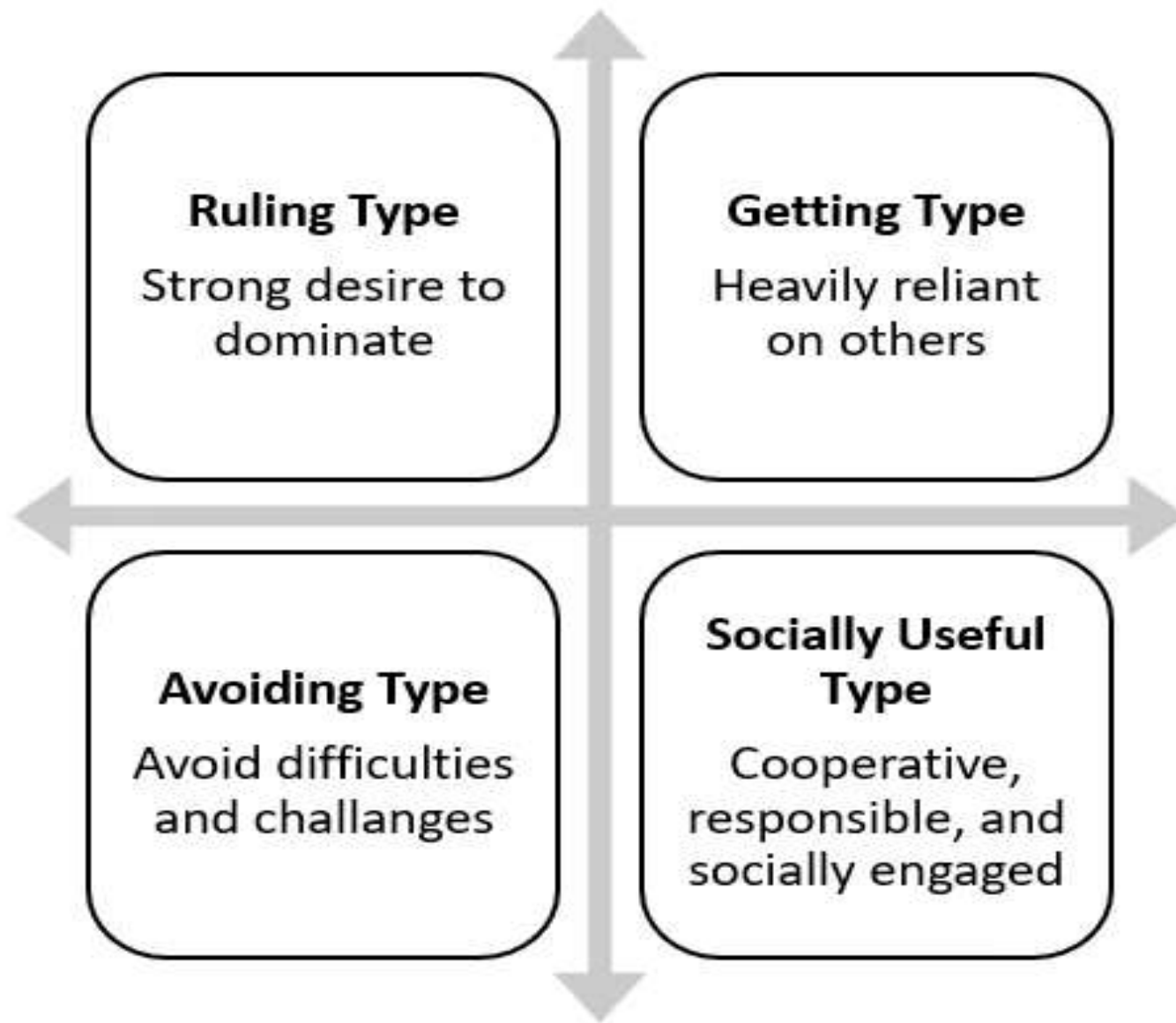- societal tasks
- love & marriage tasks
- Mistaken Lifestyle
- -Not socially useful goals –
- four type of people according to their degree of social interest.

# Alfred Adler: Aspects of Personality

Adler believed people respond to life's core challenges—**work, love, and social relationships**—in one of four ways:

| Style | Description |
|---|---|
| Dominant Type | Aggressive, controlling, lacks empathy; extreme cases may become sociopaths or addicts. |
| Getting Type | Dependent on others for support and satisfaction; passive and reliant. |
| Avoiding Type | Evades life's problems to avoid failure; lacks courage to engage with challenges. |
| Socially Useful Type | Cooperative, socially responsible, and solution-focused; shows strong social interest. |

Schultz, D. P., & Schultz, S. E. (2005). *Theories of personality*. Thomson.

Ruling Type
Strong desire to dominate

Getting Type
Heavily reliant on others

Avoiding Type
Avoid difficulties and challanges

Socially Useful Type
Cooperative, responsible, and socially engaged

https://www.careershodh.com/adlers-individual-psychology/

-The ruling-dominant type : aggressive and dominant ,e.g. bullies and sadists; alcoholics, drug addicts, and suicides.

 -The getting-leaning type: dependent on others: phobias, obsessions and compulsions, general anxiety, hysteria, amnesias

 -The avoiding type:: psychotic

 -The socially useful type: the healthy person, one who has both social interest and energy.

 -Genius – socially useful type

*Three childhood conditions that tend to create a faulty life style.

 -Physical inferiority

 -Spoiling or pampering childhood : giving of commands - hatred.

Neglecting childhood:  (A self-perpetuating situation)

# SAFEGUARDING STRATEGIES

- Neurotics use them to protect what little self-esteem and illusions of superiority a mistaken life style can generate.

- Self-centeredness- a concern with their own sense of security and superiority.

- Similar to Freud's ego defense  mechanisms but used only by neurotics e.g. excuses, aggression, and distancing

- Neurotic Behavior-

--      Overcompensated for feeling insecure to protect self esteem.

--Lack of social interest.

--Child may become self- centered or seek revenge against society.

--A distancing or hesitating attitude

--detours (deviated) & narrowed paths

--Excuses-``yes , but...''and ``if only''

-- Aggression –to protect their exaggerated sense of superiority and self esteem.

- Three Forms –

- Depreciation-over value one`s own accomplishments and to undervalue the accomplishments of others.

*Accusation-the neurotic`s tendency to blame others for his shortcomings and to seek revenge against them.

*Self- Accusation

Distancing- To escape from life problems by creating a distance between themselves and their problems-

-moving backward

-Hesitating

-Standing still (no movement)

-Constructing obstacles

-Experiencing anxiety

- **Creative Self** : Adler introduced the notion of the creative self, emphasizing that individuals are not merely passive recipients of external forces but active participants in shaping their own lives. This concept suggests that individuals have the freedom to interpret their experiences and choose their responses, thus influencing their own development.
- Teleology

# Methods of Reserech

- Birth order : **First born child :** Favorable outcome -- feel responsibility, take care of others.

Unfavorable outcome: Insecure, overly reliant on rules.

**Second born child:** Favorable outcome: Be ambitious, Want to be at least as good as the older child, Strong social interest.

Unfavorable outcome: Rebellious and envious, permanent tendency to try to surpass others, difficulty in role of follower.

**Youngest child:** Favorable: Much stimulation. Many chances to compete. Unfavorable: Feel inferior to everyone..

**Only child:** Gets undivided attention, often pampered, may compete with father.

# Alfred Adler: Personality is tied to Birth Order

| Birth Order | Key Influences | Typical Traits | Potential Issues |
|---|---|---|---|
| First-Born | Dethroned by younger siblings; plays role of teacher/tutor; high parental expectations | Responsible, conscientious, organized, leadership skills, verbal fluency | Feels displaced, may become insecure, hostile, neurotic, or controlling |
| Second-Born | Competes with older sibling; no dethronement; less parental anxiety | Competitive, ambitious, optimistic, fast development (language/motor), motivated to surpass siblings | May give up if overshadowed; risk of becoming underachiever or lacking in persistence |
| Youngest | No dethronement; often pampered; siblings serve as pacesetters | Fast development, high achievers, sociable | Overdependent, struggles with adulthood if pampered; lacks self-discipline |
| Only Child | No siblings; adult company dominates environment; remains family center | Mature early, articulate, self-focused, comfortable with adults | May struggle with sharing or competition; disappointed when not given attention outside the home |

Schultz, D. P., & Schultz, S. E. (2005). *Theories of personality*. Thomson.

# In Summary :
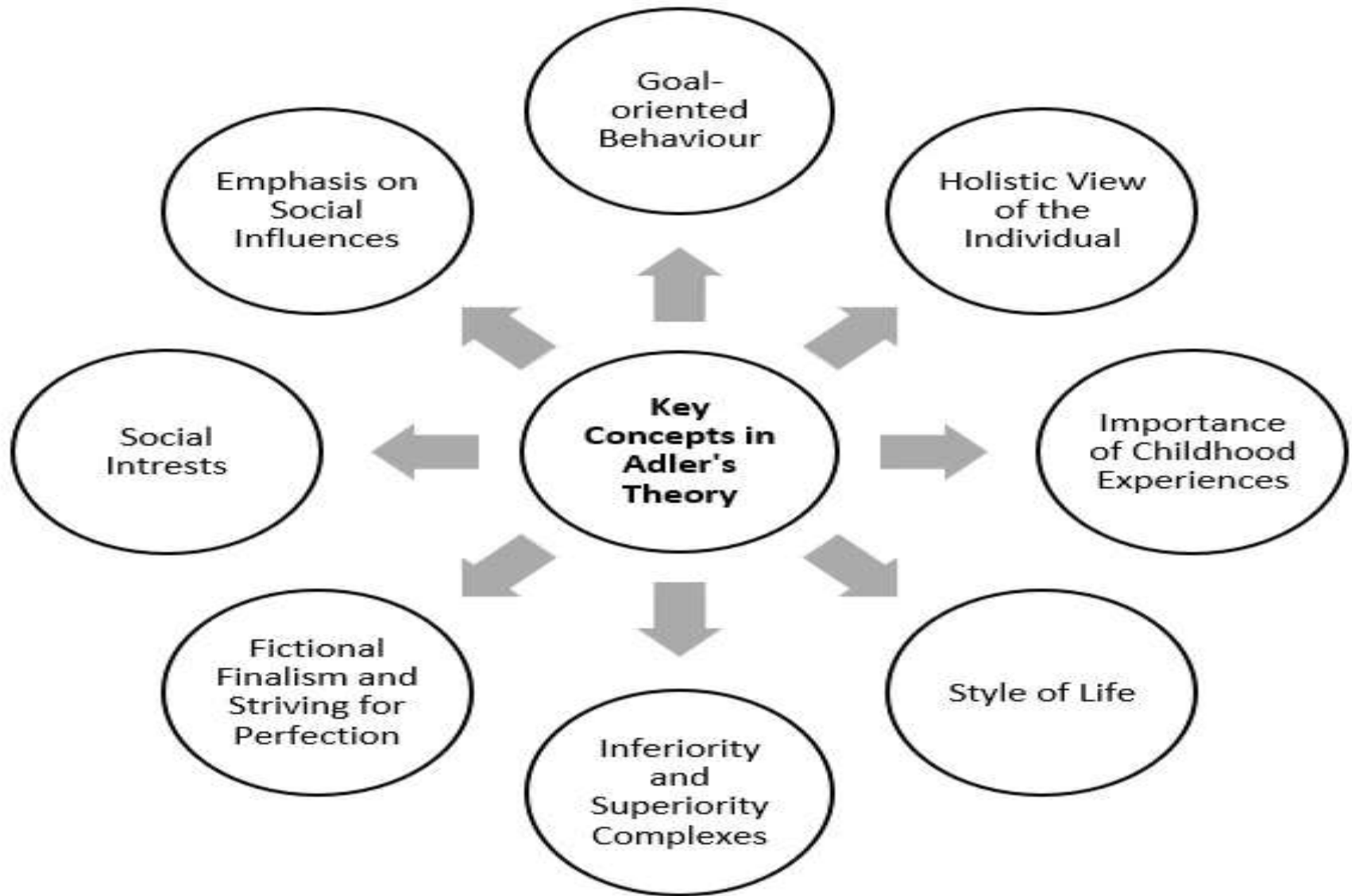
## HIGHLIGHTS: Research on Adler's Ideas

Children who are neglected tend to develop

- Feelings of worthlessness and shame
- Depression
- Anxiety

Children who are pampered tend to

- Have low self-esteem
- Become narcissistic
- Lack empathy for others

People who score high in social interest tend to

- Score low on depression, anxiety, and hostility
- Develop feelings of empathy for others
- Become happy and agreeable

Research on Adler's Theory-https://www.careershodh.com/adlers-individual-psychology/

**Research Methods:**

- First Memories

- Dream Analysis

- Behavioral Mannerisms

- Birth order

- PSYCHOTHERAPY: Includes-
  1. Understanding the specific style of life of the patient.
  2). Explaining the patient to himself or herself.
  3. Strengthening the social interest in the patient.
  In sum, Understand, interpret, direct.

Empirical Research

Evaluation

- 	Related to birth order: 	Born to Rebel
- 	The Lifestyle Analysis (Thorne,1975)
- 	Role of early memories (Olson,1979)

Criticisms

- Overly Simplistic
- Lack of Scientific Rigor and Empirical Evidence
- Limited Focus on Early Development and Over-Generalization

Contribution

The Importance of Social variables
Widely influential

My difficulties belong to me!--- Alfred Adler

## Table 7.1   Freud, Adler, and Jung

| Theory | Key Concepts | The Counseling Process | Techniques |
|---|---|---|---|
| Freud's psychoanalytic theory | Endopsychic conflicts resulting from the id, ego, and superego; defense mechanisms; the conscious–unconscious continuum; and the effects of traumatic experiences in childhood on personality development | Has the major aim of resolving intrapsychic conflicts to restructure the personality as necessary. | Dream analysis and free association can be used to explore unconscious processes; confronting, clarification, and interpretation provide necessary insight. |
| Adler's individual psychology | The creative self, behavior as goal directed and purposeful, social interest, striving for significance as a motivational force, and the family constellation | Is educationally oriented, providing information to clients and guiding them and attempting to encourage discouraged clients. | The lifestyle analysis is an assessment technique, motivation modification is used to modify underlying motivational forces, and other techniques are used to reorient clients away from basic mistakes. |
| Jung's analytic psychology | The collective unconscious, archetypes, and personality types | Explores unconscious processes to help the self emerge so clients can be free to move toward self-realization | Analyze the interrelationship of several dreams for their symbolic content and cues to the various systems of the personality. |

# The Classic Theories of Human Motivation
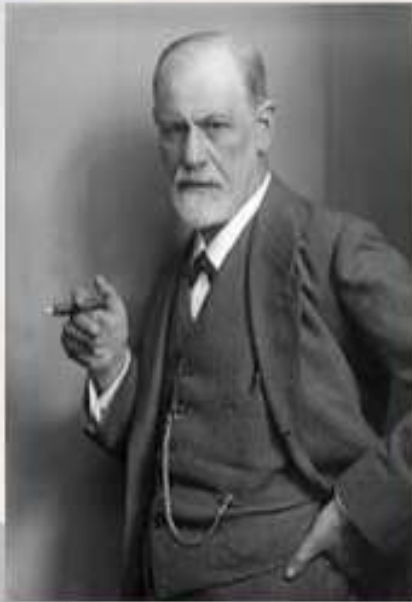
**Sigmund Freud**
(1856-1939)

➢ the unconscious.

We aim to feed the unconscous: id (instinctual desires), ego (self-gratification), and super-ego (seeking for perfection).

**Carl Gustav Jung**
(1875-1961)

➢ intraversion vs extraversion,
➢ collective unconscious.

We aim to achieve a perfect balance between our inner life and the world around us.

**Alfred Adler**
(1870-1937)

➢ the desire for self-improvement,
➢ the "upward drive" for perfection.

We aim to contribute and to prove our value to the world.