

*Alfred Adler Institute
of Northwestern Washington*

A Clinician's Guide to The Collected Clinical Works of Alfred Adler

A Unified System of
Depth Psychotherapy,
Philosophy, & Pedagogy

Edited by Henry T. Stein, Ph.D.
& Laurie J. Stein, M.A., M.S.

Classical Adlerian Translation Project

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The psychic life has a creative power that is identical with the life force itself. This creative power has the capacity to anticipate, which it must do, because human beings move. The psychic life means movement and direction with one goal.

* * *

To fully understand this impetus toward the guiding ideal, the final fictional goal, is to come to know, compressed in a single point: past, present, future and the intended finale, all at the same time.

* * *

Another definition of neurosis is “Yes – but.” In the “yes” is embedded the recognition of social feeling; in the “but,” the retreat and its safeguards. The neurotic turns his whole interest toward the retreat, until it becomes an elaborate “Retreat Complex.” Even the question, “Why should I love my neighbor?” springs from the inseparable connectedness of mankind and the stern criterion of the community ideal. Only he who carries within himself, in his “law-of-movement,” a sufficient degree of the community ideal and lives according to it as easily as he breathes, will solve his inevitable difficulties.

Alfred Adler

Table of Contents

Table of Contents

Editor's Preface 2012.....	ii
Introduction by Sophia de Vries.....	vi
Volume 1: The Neurotic Character	1
Volume 2: A Study of Organ Inferiority: Articles: 1898-1909	11
Volume 3: Journal Articles: 1910-1913	16
Volume 4: Journal Articles: 1914-1920	26
Volume 5: Journal Articles: 1921-1926	35
Volume 6: Journal Articles: 1927-1931	50
Volume 7: Journal Articles: 1931-1937	63
Volume 8: Lectures to Physicians & Medical Students	79
Volume 9: Case Histories	96
Volume 10: Case Readings & Demonstrations	132
Volume 11: Education for Prevention	194
Volume 12: The General System of Individual Psychology	222
Appendix A: Basic Principles of Adlerian Psychology	243
Appendix B: Classical Adlerian Theory and Practice.....	246
Appendix C: Classical Adlerian Depth psychotherapy	
Distance Training and Certification.....	274
Appendix D: Ordering Information.....	275

Volume 10

Case Readings & Demonstrations:

The Problem Child

The Pattern of Life

Volume 10 consists of two parts. In Part 1, *The Problem Child* (1930), Adler uses a number of cases to discuss the life style of the difficult child. In Part 2, *The Pattern of Life* (1930), he also uses case studies to illustrate specific theoretical constructs, uncovering the psychological dynamics of each case, as he does in actual therapy sessions.

Part 1: *The Problem Child*.

Introduction: Man and His Fellows. Before addressing particular cases, Adler gives an overview of the basic concepts of IP. He begins by emphasizing that “the life of the human soul is not a 'being' but a 'becoming.’” All psychic life is a “striving to overcome” the difficulties of relating to others. In this striving, although we all make some mistakes, we consider “good” and “beautiful” that which is useful to the community. The cornerstone of IP is social feeling, and the mother plays a major role in nurturing it in the child. The subsequent way we use our intellect and our way of seeing, speaking, and listening all reflect our degree of social feeling, our desire to connect with others, and to contribute. Many factors can interfere with the development of this interest in others, promoting a sense of weakness and lack of confidence in a child, thereby leading him to become someone who leans on others, instead of contributing, who takes, instead of giving. As Adler says, “We must develop ourselves and our children to become the instruments for social progress.”

In **Ch. I: Exaggeration of Self-Importance**, before presenting the first case, Adler describes the purpose of this book and his strategy for achieving it. “In order to explain the methods of IP, I would like to show you the way I proceed when dealing with the history of a problem child, a neurotic, or a criminal, in trying to discover the basis and real causes of his erroneous ways. To give you a correct idea of our approach, I would like to discuss a case with which, up to this very moment, I was not familiar. I have no previous notion of the events described in this case

history, and shall try to follow the same procedure which I usually pursue in my practice.” (In his valuable book, *The Drive for Self: Alfred Adler and the Founding of Individual Psychology* (1994), page 236, Edward Hoffman explains that *The Problem Child* “was based on edited transcripts of Adler's Viennese demonstration lectures with emotionally disturbed children and their families.” Thus, Adler will spontaneously analyze and interpret case reports with which he was not previously familiar, as he has done several times before in other volumes.)

“It has become possible for us to draw conclusions about the whole from small details, as in natural history one gains information about the specimen from one little bone. And yet we are more prudent than those who try to describe and understand the life picture according to their prejudices. We proceed critically by tentative suppositions and their corrections.”

“We know that every child begins with a feeling of inferiority and tries to compensate for it; that he tends toward a goal of superiority, totality, that he strives for using his powers in order to cope with all difficulties. We differentiate, however, whether this striving is directed toward the useful or the useless side of life. We try to locate the obstacle which caused the deviation; we try to find the problem which proved too difficult. We ask, 'How did it happen that, at this point, the individual felt unable to cope with life's problems? Why did he prove unprepared at this particular moment?' Experience has shown us that it is always the child in whom the social feeling was underdeveloped. This made it easier for the child to hesitate, to stop, to avoid things, to be satisfied with a useless solution of the immediate problem, which in itself already contains damage to others.

I shall try to utilize and demonstrate our technique in the interpretation of such a case. I received the following description.” (He then reads the case report aloud, and makes comments, interpreting the material for his audience. Most of the chapters in *The Problem Child* follow this pattern.)

The subject is an eleven-year-old girl, an only child, well-developed, well behaved both at home and at school, who is now in her first year of junior high school. When she has to go to school in the morning, she is so nervous that everyone in the house suffers. As soon as she wakes, she complains that she has been awakened too late. Instead of getting dressed, she sits and cries. She complains about the way her hair is done

and about her hair ribbon. She runs off without breakfast, crying and complaining.

(Adler: This child is animated by ambition; she wants to be the center of attention, both at school and at home. She does not have much courage. We can also tell something about the development of her social feeling. No one will doubt that the torment which she inflicts on her family bothers her very little. The only thing which matters to her is to be a martyr. All the difficulties she invents, even the fact that she goes without food, are intended to make the picture more painful. She is strongly concerned with her own prestige, but not very considerate of others. The only person who tries to upset others is one who believes herself incapable, by her own actions, of proving her own importance. Perhaps we could adopt the following point of view toward this little girl: "If you want to take my word for it. You are doing very well. But perhaps you should do even better. All this means simply that you are a very intelligent little girl who has found a good way to get her family upset.")

In **Ch II: Students Repeat a Grade**, Adler presents two case reports. The first one concerns a nine-year-old girl. Because she is repeating the second grade and has trouble with arithmetic, the school thinks she may be mentally retarded. The parents disagree. They believe she may lack self-confidence, and suspect that she may exploit her disability in order to gain more attention at home, where her two sisters, both very gifted, try to help her.

In the second case, a nine-year-old girl is repeating the third grade, and has a tendency to lie and steal. Her parents are separated. The mother gave her little affection, and her father, to whom she is most attached, punishes and beats her. Her father turns her over to her grandparents, who also do not want her. Although forbidden to do so, she visits her mother, steals money from her, and uses it to buy sweets for her schoolmates. She lives with foster-parents, from whom she has also stolen. They do not want her either. Since they learned about her misdemeanors at school, she has been shunned there. Because of her mother's lack of affection and the judgments made by everybody, she opposes all around her. (Adler: We have here a perfect example of a child with a pronounced feeling of inferiority stemming from being unwanted. She feels hated. We have to correct this error; we must make it clear to her, even if she is right, that she has no reason to believe there

are no friendly, accepting people in the world. She is caught in a trap in which everyone appears as an enemy. Her social feeling cannot be developed. However, she is seeking affection; hence, it should not be too difficult to gain her confidence. She must be freed from her wrong impression that man is bad by nature. This will not be easy. Perhaps some teacher might accomplish incidentally and without actually understanding her, the most important task, and that is: to give her courage.)

In **Ch III: A Father Prevents Social Feeling**, Adler reads the report of a six-year-old boy. With his three younger siblings and his father, the boy sells newspapers on the street because the family is poor. The apartment is small with only two beds; he sleeps with his father, who is frequently kept awake with his lung condition. When this happens, the father becomes irritated and beats the boy. He shows little affection for the boy, preferring the boy's younger sister. The boy often stays out past midnight, was picked up by the police on several occasions, and begs in front of candy stores and movie houses. At school he is dirty and cannot sit still. (Adler: In school one must sit still. If he cannot sit still it means that he doesn't want to be in school. At school, sitting has a different meaning than elsewhere in life: it is a social function. A child's social integration with school is expressed in this physical attitude. What does he do then? We can guess.)

He strolls about in the classroom, sings while the teacher is talking, and mimics his schoolmates' answers. (Adler: Isn't this already a sign of escape? But escape is not easy; certain threats appear. This boy would no doubt have preferred to run away. He can still act up so badly that he is thrown out. And then he won't be running any more risks.) He tries to start quarrels with his schoolmates. He almost broke a schoolmate's finger. He uses vulgar expressions fluently. He is alert, capable of answering very well when questions are put to him, and very good in arithmetic.

(Adler: We can well understand that the boy has always had to calculate: whether he was going to get anything to eat, how much money he could get by begging, etc. He is not far from achieving his goal: to be expelled from school. The teacher, who was taken in by his game, is doing what the boy wants him to do. And yet, he would like to be a leader. He would like to have everyone watching him, and to be the center of attention. Moreover, he has succeeded, in a sense. The whole class pays attention to him. Nobody takes as much of the teacher's time as he does. He has in

fact become the most important person. A way to the useful side of life must be cleared for this boy. We must strengthen his courage so that he believes in his ability to succeed in something useful.)

The second case is about a four-year-old girl, a youngest child, who persists in sucking her thumb. She also refuses food and vomits easily. When her parents try to bathe her, she screams and struggles.

In the third case, a boy of five, the eldest of several siblings, is of normal intelligence. But he “manhandles” other children and furniture, or even destroys valuable objects, whenever they are in his way. Reared very strictly, he has been told to model himself after his father, a gifted engineer who designs and paints.

Ch IV: A Spoiled Youngest Child focuses on an eleven-year-old girl. The mother had fourteen children, and Petronilla is the youngest of the surviving seven. After reading aloud and interpreting the lengthy report, Adler meets with the mother, then the girl for a brief demonstration. This is the longest of the 22 chapters about problem children, and a classic example of a spoiled child, an ineffective mother, and Adler's approach.

The father is a retired railroad man; the mother is a housekeeper. According to the school report, the girl works willingly for a certain period of time; then her enthusiasm diminishes. (Adler: When you notice such instability in the work of a child going to school, you can conclude with some justification that the child is spoiled. She will make progress only under certain conditions, when she is in a pleasant situation, when progress comes without effort; when everything goes smoothly.) She prefers penmanship, drawing, and manual work. The mother defends her bad conduct. (Adler: We obtain confirmation that the child is spoiled.)

She tries to distract others by creating disturbances. (Adler: This does not surprise us, since we know that such a spoiled child, who has a certain degree of activity, will employ her desire to be the center of attention particularly on the useless side.) Remarkable memory. (Adler: I would not be surprised if an intelligence test showed her mental level to be above average.) Sound ideas; critical talent. Goes at all new work courageously. (Adler: We begin to see the outlines of her style of life. We have the picture of a very active child who takes an interest in the world around her and who certainly strives to raise herself above others.

Now, in the social milieu of school, how will she rise above the teacher?) The recognition that her work is well done encourages her a great deal.

Has a tendency to leadership. But is not well equipped to lead. (Adler: Why isn't she well equipped? The other children oppose her. They don't want to be led and commanded by her. She has not yet learned how to lead others.) Expresses herself well and talks easily. (Adler: Talking is another way of attracting attention. You will often find this love of talking in problem children, neurotics, and psychotics. Such people talk constantly.)

For the past two or three weeks she has been behaving very badly. She shouts during lessons, constantly leaves her seat, and disturbs others. (Adler: She tries to outdo the others. She wants to demonstrate her power, to achieve domination over the other children.) During classroom work she refuses to cooperate. When reprimanded, she became angry, seized the inkwell, poured ink on her hands, and soiled the desk. (Adler: She goes beyond all limits and behaves like an enraged conqueror who is determined at all costs to show that she is the strongest. She shows us by her attitude that she has lost hope of playing an important role in this school.)

The mother is called in to the school. Losing all control in her anger, she pulled the child's hair, senselessly slapped her in the face, and twisted her arm. (Adler: The mother also lost her self-control. This is not a good method for punishing the child's ultimate effort. The child does not care at all if she upsets her mother and teacher.) The principal quieted the mother with difficulty, and had the child go back to her classroom. The child did not cry, and did not shout; she controlled herself. (Adler: You see how she showed her mother, "You are too weak for me. I am stronger than you!")

No sooner had the mother left than the child was sent back to the principal because she was making it impossible to carry on the classroom work. The principal gave her a responsible task: to bring the calendar up to date. (Adler: This is one way to calm a child at school, but this girl wants something more. She wants to be more than all the other children.) The teacher entered the classroom. The child remarked that the teacher had pretty curls, and wanted to know where she could buy them. (Adler: This signifies open hostility. The girl is engaged in an out-and-out struggle with the teacher.)

During two natural science lessons the principal had to remain in the classroom in order for the work to proceed undisturbed. (Adler: She isn't strong enough to challenge the principal.) When she wouldn't do her arithmetic, she was sent to the principal's office again, where she was given additional tasks: sealing envelopes and carrying messages between classrooms. (Adler: She has found the place that appeals to her: the principal's office. If she is sent somewhere else, she strives to get back. Her movement is in this direction because at the principal's office, she finds herself in a pleasant situation.)

She has said, "I want to be a teacher." (Adler: This does not surprise us because in the image of the teacher she recognizes a person of power.) "If I had to handle a naughty child, I'd just beat him."

Once she made so much noise at the beginning of the class that it was impossible to continue teaching the lesson. She ran around the classroom, hitting other children and insulting them. At one point, she shouted, "I'll stick a knife in your ribs!" Nor did she become more cooperative later on. She kept saying, "I can't do that." (Adler: This also means: So I must bother other people. If I can't play the leading role, I won't play any more.)

Adler invites the mother in.

Adler: We would like to help you and the teacher. You know, we like the child. She knows what she wants. But perhaps she doesn't like the school.

Mother: She wanted to go to the Y Street School. She believes she wasn't assigned to that school because she is the worst student.

Adler: Does she have any friends?

Mother: Oh yes, of course.

Adler: We have confidence in this child. We think she is a capable girl. She always wants to be a leader, doesn't she?

Mother: She complains a lot that the teacher doesn't call on her in class. At home she is very sweet; she helps me a lot.

Adler: What kind of upbringing has she had? Was it strict?

Mother: You have to be strict with all of them.

Adler: I believe that if you explained things to this child, that would work, too.

Mother: You never get anywhere without punishing them.

Adler: I was thinking that we could find someone around here who understands the child, who would take walks with her, who would give her better ideas. If you are willing, I could send one of my students.

Mother: I believe I've given my other children a good upbringing, and I think I can manage to raise this one, too.

After the mother leaves, Adler says, "You can see her resistance to letting anyone interfere. For the time being, we'll just have to draw back." The girl enters.

Adler: What a grown-up girl! I had the idea you were much smaller. You probably always want to appear bigger than you are. You'd like to stand on your toes so that everybody would notice you. The youngest child in a family often has this feeling: she wants to be noticed. You are a good student, a capable girl. And they tell me you are an intelligent child. Don't you think you could be one of the best in your class because of what you know? If you succeeded in that, you would also get what you really want. Then everybody would respect you and like you. Don't you want to try it? Do you think you can do it?

The girl is silent.

Adler: You could become one of the best students. What do you say to that? Wouldn't that be nice?

Silence.

Adler: It isn't easy, but I think you can do it. Come back in a month. In the meantime, I'll find out whether you have succeeded, or whether you persist in being the center of attention in your class.

Silence.

After she leaves, Adler continues his lecture: She's a sensitive girl. She could have cried quite easily. It is a good idea to have a child appear in front of a group of people. This signifies that her difficulties are not a private matter, since strangers are also interested in them. It may help awaken her social interest. Also, I always tell them, "I will find out how you're doing." This is not a threat. I want the child to have the certainty that someone is waiting to see the results. In our method there is an artistic aspect which cannot be understood scientifically. If I touch the right spot, the child will understand me; and this "being in a community" is a major factor.

In **Ch V: The Alleged Crises of Puberty**, Adler addresses the case report of a fourteen-year-old girl who started a number of sexual relationships, disappeared from home for ten days, and was found near her parents' house. She is the middle child of three in a poor family. The oldest, a boy, was sick for a long time; the father was sick at the same time. So the mother had little time for the girl. Then, after they both got well, the mother had a third child, another girl. By this time, the middle child was feeling emotionally neglected, "lacking the warmth of mother love." She got little from the father who was a strict disciplinarian.

By good fortune, she had a teacher whom she liked very much. "She blossomed and became one of the best students in the class." But when she was fourteen, she had to move on to high school, and the trouble began. Her new teacher did not understand her and treated her harshly. She received bad grades; she began to skip school. When the teacher investigated and found she was hanging around with boys, she was expelled. (Adler: This is the worst thing that could be done to her. Her success at school is over and she feels neglected at home. What is left for her? The art of IP consists in identifying oneself with the situation in which this girl finds herself: "What would I do if I were a fourteen-year-old girl who wanted to be appreciated, but found no appreciation at home?" There is only one answer: to seek this appreciation from the other sex. Knowing that she is intelligent, we can predict what will happen now: she will not get from the other sex the appreciation she is looking for. She will see herself as an object, the plaything of men. If we continue to identify with her: "What is to be done now?" There is only suicide.)

There are a few letters announcing her suicide, and it might have happened if a fortunate circumstance had not kept her from it; also, she knew her parents would forgive her. They took her back and started showing her some appreciation. Her mother even went to a counseling center.

(Adler: I would like to comment on the psychology of puberty. It is commonly regarded as though “the devil has taken possession” and the nature of the individual child changes. Neither one of these ideas is accurate. Puberty means more freedom, more possibilities, and greater attraction for the other sex, but children want to prove they are no longer children, so they go too far. Puberty is not a disease; it only shows what had been there before. Nothing changes. People are not led into error by facts, but by their misinterpretation of the facts. This girl created a cause: withheld affection suddenly became a cause. If she is cured, there is no longer any cause.)

It is not the facts which count, but the opinion we have of them. IP involves seeking out the possibilities of error and reducing them to a minimum of treatment. The conclusion of two human beings may be fundamentally different. We cannot ignore that facts are misunderstood and misinterpreted by a great many people.)

In **Chapter VI: The Only Child**, Adler discusses the difficulties of a nine-year-old boy in the presence of the teacher and parents. It begins with the teacher's report.

The teacher: The boy is in fourth grade with both sexes, and I have had him for two years. An only child, both his parents work, so he stays with his grandmother. He does not obey her. Although his hearing is impaired, he has a good memory for figures. His penmanship is poor. He's very talkative, disorderly, and bothers the other students.

Reprimands and punishments don't work; he just cries and promises to be good, but starts the same behavior again. He uses his inkwell as a spittoon, and breaks all the inkwell tops. I have tried kindness and severity both. Nothing works. He always tries to attract attention in one way or another.

Most recently, he stole twenty shillings from another boy. His mother was very upset, and recalled that small amounts of money go missing at home. I have often noticed this at school, too. When the child is faced with proof of his lies, his face goes so blank that one gets the impression he is mentally retarded (which he is not). In the principal's office, the mother cried, saying her husband would kill him. When the boy was sent back to class, he played tricks and amused all the students.

Adler: (addressing the teacher) We hear the same refrain in all the details. The boy is disorderly; probably someone at home puts his things in order. At school, he works slowly, and makes himself conspicuous to gain attention. His style of life is that of a pampered child. He has been staying with his grandmother, where he lacks many things his mother gave him. So he is dissatisfied and tries to enrich himself. Stealing is a compensation to replace what he has lost. He wants to make himself look bigger.

We must agree on how we can influence the mother. We should also see to it that the boy makes progress at school, and we must stimulate his courage. I advise you to acquire a skill in recognizing what I call the radius of action. In problem children this radius of action is always narrowed. We must try to enlarge it. This is possible only when he has more courage, when he believes that he, too, can achieve something. This would give him the chance to change his circle of action completely. In the tight corner where he is now, nothing is left to him but to enrich himself secretly, and to use lying to prevent the loss of his status and esteem.

The teacher: He is not disliked in class. He has never failed a grade. He is a slow student, but he learns rather well.

Adler: We are trying to find out why he is not satisfied at school. One of the main reasons must be that he always wants to be the center of attention. He is concerned only with himself and tries to get everything he wants in a sly way, by using his charm. He has been conditioned for this by the attitude of his mother, who has always pampered him.

Adler: (addressing the parents) I would like to talk to your boy. It is possible to get rid of his bad habits. Haven't you found that he is looking for affection? He is always finding something so that he can be with you. How does he do his homework?

The father: If somebody is standing over him, he does it very well. He prefers the company of grown-ups; they are more friendly to him. He is a little afraid of me because I am very nervous.

Adler: Be gentle with him, and take walks with him when your wife isn't along so that he will form a friendship with you and will do what you want out of love and friendship, and not out of fear.

The mother: When he's dressing, I have to keep him at it until he's ready.

Adler: (addressing both parents) It isn't necessary to keep after him. The important thing is to make him independent, gradually and very gently, so that he will take even more interest in school and will be able to make a place for himself there. That will keep him out of the kind of trouble he has been in. Don't threaten him, and don't talk to him about this matter any more.

The boy enters for a very brief interview, then leaves. Adler concludes his remarks: One should think in terms of encouraging him. He should not be pressured; you must have patience with him. Perhaps he should be told, "I can see that everything will be all right. I know that you are going to be one of the best students again." He has always wanted the teacher to pay attention to him. If he behaves badly again, I would tell him in a humorous way, "It isn't even worth your trouble. We are all interested in you." A remark of this kind might impress him. How it should be made depends on the individual personality. I would perhaps do it in such a "slightly humorous" way.

In **Chapter VII: The Discouraged Youngest Child**, Adler reads and comments on the case of a fourteen-year-old boy. (Adler: Fourteen is the age of puberty. The major factor during puberty is that the child has an urge to demonstrate that he is an adult and no longer a child. If I try to prove that I am no longer a child, I will always go too far.)

Emil is the youngest of six children; the others range in age from seventeen to twenty-six. At primary school, he was among the best students, but since he started secondary school he has dropped behind, and is now threatened with expulsion. (Adler: This is the typical victorious striving of the youngest as long as he is in a favorable

situation. But if the situation changes, then we see that he has not been adequately prepared.)

He had to repeat a year of school, and since then he has progressed only with great difficulty. (Adler: Now he is running into difficulties and he no longer makes progress.) Secondary school seems especially detestable to him because one of his former schoolmates from primary school, who didn't do particularly well there, has managed not to repeat a year and is now a year ahead of him. (Adler: The youngest child cannot bear it when someone gets ahead of him; he has fought against many difficulties.) He complains of the bad treatment he gets at school and blames his teacher, who he says does not like him. (Adler: If one merely ceases to pamper him, he immediately shows his bad temper.)

He is nervous, irritable, very excitable, and generally disobedient. According to his mother, he is a good boy and knows how to win over his family with his good nature and his endearments. (Adler: You will often find spoiled children who are very skillful at winning over others. They have a special kind of charm.) When he sees his mother crying or suffering, he will do anything for her. (Adler: Here he is the one who gives, since he has already achieved his goal: namely, to tyrannize and dominate his mother.)

He has to be compelled to eat. (Adler: A common symptom in pampered children is that they make trouble about eating.) In general he does not follow orders that are given to him. He often stays in bed until nine o'clock and is late to school. An investigation made by the school indicates that the entire family is probably responsible for the child's carelessness. They all stay in bed until noon and the whole family lies.

Most teachers agree that the boy is a liar, inattentive, lazy, and sly. (Adler: This is harsh, even if it is accurate. The boy seems to feel that all his teachers are his enemies.) But they are all convinced that the boy is not stupid, and that he could meet the school's requirements if he were in a better situation. (Adler: As soon as this boy who always wants to be the leader encounters a difficult situation, he can no longer meet the school's requirements. We find here the character traits of the fighter opposing a superior force.)

He does inadequate work mostly in mathematics, history, geography, and religion. (Adler: We are convinced that the boy is intelligent. We must

find someone who can win him over; someone who will encourage him and develop his interest in his schoolmates and his subjects. One could tell him that everybody has difficulties and that one must be strong in the face of these difficulties. But only a person in whom the boy has confidence can succeed here. It is likely that a man would do better because the boy will regard a woman in the same way as he does his mother. The poor school work he is doing now can be attributed to his feeling of antagonism against the school.)

Chapter VIII: Mentally Retarded or Problem Child? begins with Adler's general comment: "It is very important for us that we establish a clear picture of a particular case even before seeing the mother or the child. I shall read to you this case history, and you will see how I endeavor to draw conclusions from every bit of information.

When the five-year-old boy entered kindergarten, he was neglected, and physically and mentally retarded. (Adler: We can deduce from this that no one gave him any attention. It is essential to mental development that a child be closely associated with someone so he can exercise his mind.) He was undernourished, unkempt, poorly clothed, and had no shoes, although it was almost winter. (Adler: This child apparently came from a very poor family, a bad situation.) Also, he was backward mentally, and could scarcely talk. (Adler: A child can develop his use of language only in a social relationship. If this relationship is lacking, he cannot develop his speech. We should ask ourselves whether the child is not perhaps mentally retarded. This is only a hypothesis, and we should be cautious in our investigations, because if we put forth such a diagnosis, the fate of the child will be sealed. To call a child retarded when in fact he is not, is an unpardonable mistake.)

He attacked the other children, but was always afraid of being attacked by them. He required help at mealtime, and always waited for someone to feed him. (Adler: It is usually pampered children who have difficulties with eating.) But he often refused food, although he was hungry. (Adler: The child behaves as though he were in enemy territory.)

He is a legitimate child. He was very slow in learning to walk and to talk; and up to the present has not learned to speak correctly. (Adler: We must consider organic defects. Perhaps he suffered from rickets, and perhaps his teething was delayed, which is part of the same illness.) He wets his bed constantly. (Adler: This indicates he wants to make trouble

for someone and tried to get attention by being bad.) He suffered badly from rickets, and was very backward mentally. (Adler: This is a confirmation.)

He was not sociable, and he did not get along with anyone. (Adler: This is true for the pampered child as well as the hated child.) He tortures animals and human beings. (Adler: This can also be found in both types. They want to demonstrate their power.) He always wanted to be first. (Adler: The opinion that originally he was a pampered child has been confirmed. His parents were perhaps in a better situation previously, and it changed. Since then he has lacked love and warmth.)

Now he goes to kindergarten willingly, and he tries to see that he always has the handkerchief I gave him as a present. (Adler: He is now beginning to adapt – a sign which enable us to conclude that he already has a relationship with the kindergarten teacher. We observe that she has been able to win him over, and to recreate the agreeable situation in which he was pampered.) Once he starts a job, he sees it through to the end. And if he is praised for it, he is more than ready to start all over again. (Adler: Here is the lever which can direct this boy. In the beginning he works because it opens up a situation in which he is praised and like. Rather than to praise him immediately, one should tell him, “If you do it this way, it will be very good.”)

His achievements are in the physical area. Normal and rhythmic gymnastics are his favorite activities, and he does brilliantly in them. (Adler: The fact that he masters systematic movements in gymnastics and achieves top results, indicates the kind of coordination which is not possessed by a retarded child. I do not feel that I am entitled to draw any conclusions yet.)

The chapter ends. Adler has demonstrated the accuracy of his speculations, but in the face of conflicting information, he declines to draw any final conclusions.

In Chapter IX: Misdirected Ambition: The Youngest of Five Children, a teacher has given Adler the following case history. The girl is nine years old, in the fourth grade, and the youngest of five children. She was especially pampered by her parents and siblings. As school, she does impeccable work, has a lively imagination and good penmanship,

and expresses herself well. She faces her work with courage and shows considerable skill in physical education.

But she finds ways to make herself constantly noticed, with chattering, an arrogant attitude, quarreling, and wildness. She interrupts other children, and leaves her seat to inspect their mistakes. She pulls their hair and threatens to beat them when school is out. She likes to play tricks. She told me she had let a bird out of a cage that the landlord had put in the courtyard, claiming that she felt sorry for the bird. She also pulled down the shutters on the butcher's shop. Her mother asked me to be very severe with the girl, who wears her out at home.

Adler: In this report, the central point of the child's development is emphasized with great precision. This little girl shows an especially marked tendency toward misdirected self-assertion. As the youngest child, she wants to surpass all the others. I would like to repeat those things that strike me as her line of movement.

She strives to be more than anybody else. As school, she has achieved only partial success; and she tried to fill in the missing part by interrupting, by her attacks, and by making trouble for her mother. It is impossible to change this child by beatings and punishment. I believe that her true motive in letting the bird escape was not pity, as she claimed, but rather a certain joy caused by attacking the property of another. This is the same reason she enjoys the mistakes of others; this is how she finds her superiority.

She must be made to understand the mistake she is making. She must be shown that she has an exaggerated tendency to be superior, and that when she does not succeed in achieving this in a useful way, she tries to assert herself in useless ways. But this explanation should not take the form of a reproach, which would make her struggle even more, wanting to prove that she is the strongest. She needs an outsider to give her some friendly pointers and show her what is taking place inside her. There can be no hope of a change so long as she keeps to her mistaken goal: to be at all times the first and center of attention. The best way to enlighten the child and the mother is to point out that a youngest child very often wants to be the center of attention.

Chapter X: The Rejected Child consists of Adler's comments on the school report he reads aloud. A five-year-old boy, born out of wedlock,

has been living with foster parents. His older foster brother and alcoholic foster father both beat him. "During the father's drunkenness, all the intimacies of family life were enacted before the boy. This fact can be related to the mother's statement that the child had the habit of playing with his penis." He also tortures small animals: flies, bugs, and worms. (Adler: The fact that he tortures animals shows that he has a hostile attitude toward the weak. He looks upon the world as hostile toward him.) Although he is physically neglected, he shows no organic abnormalities. He had been living with his own mother for a while, but when she had to be hospitalized, he went back into foster care. She makes it clear that she does not like him. (Adler: A rejected child: illegitimate.)

The mother has told me, "Be severe with him. I punish him, too. You have to speak roughly to him or he won't obey. He's used to it." She seems to hold him responsible for being illegitimate. To attract attention, he makes little crying sounds, stamps his feet, moves chairs around noisily, or pounds on the table. Sometimes he throws himself on the floor and cries. (Adler: One has the impression that he wants to provoke those around him. He knows very well what will happen.) He has no social feeling. He stirs up the other children, takes their toys away, scratches and hits them. When they are asleep, he wakens them. (Adler: He behaves like an angry enemy.)

He likes to go to kindergarten. On Sundays, he asks to go back to school. The first few days he even refused to go home. (Adler: This clearly shows that he feels better at kindergarten. I have no doubt that in this way he will make progress.) When it is time to be taken home, he seems restless and troubled. He is generous. He once gave me a plum from his lunch, and shortly afterward gave me another, saying "Here is one more so you will have two." He likes to give what he has. (Adler: Here is something which proves he is beginning to acquire a certain degree of social feeling. It requires some time before a child like this one begins to warm up. One must be patient; and it is only then that other difficulties can be overcome. I will try to make the mother understand in a friendly way that she must engender in the child the feeling that he has as much worth as the others.)

In **Chapter XI: An Only Child Seeks to Play a Role**, after first reading the teacher's report, Adler interviews the mother and the eleven-year-old boy. At school, the boy interferes with classroom work, quarrels with

other students, brags, always wants to take the lead, and doesn't get along with anyone. An only child, at home he frequently lies to his mother and has stolen some change from her. She punishes and spansks him. But she has also promised him a little pocket money every week, which pleased him. He has expressed a desire to be a ship captain when he grows up, and once remarked, "I would very much enjoy ruling a whole ship."

Adler (to the mother): The fact that he stole some change is not so very serious, and you shouldn't talk to him about it. It was a very good idea to give him the pocket money. If he knows he can count on this allowance, he will calm down. Personally, I would try not to spank him at all. It would be advisable for you to change and even give up the whole process of punishment. Let him work by himself, see that he becomes independent. (The mother leaves.)

Adler (to the boy): What would you like to be later in life?

The boy: Captain on an ocean liner.

Adler: Why do you like that profession so much? What is it that you like so much about it?

The boy: That you can order others around.

Adler: Where do you order around now? Do you do it with your mother or in school?

The boy: I do order the children around.

Adler: If you want to be a captain, you have to give intelligent orders so that everybody will say you are doing the right thing. But at school, with the other children, you aren't the captain, and it doesn't fit that you give orders there. I don't understand why you want to give orders at school. Because of that, you probably don't have any friends. I would like you to have some friends. Wouldn't you like to go to the child care center? Perhaps your mother will let you learn gymnastics, too. People can learn anything. . . . What are you going to do with the money you are saving?

The boy: If some day I am in need, I'll have something.

Adler: Are you afraid that you might be in need? That you might fall down? If you are a hard worker, that's the best way to avoid poverty. You know, having money isn't the most important kind of security. Do you like to brag, too?

The boy: Yes.

Adler: You should get rid of that habit. If a person wants to be a captain, he shouldn't lie. If you learn well and become a decent man, you can become anything you want. If you want to be a captain, you have to build a good foundation. Come back in a month and tell me if you have made some friends, if you have stopped interfering with the teacher's work in the classroom, and if you still want to give orders.

Chapter XII: The Oldest Child Dethroned consists of Adler's comments on the report from a father of two boys, aged seven and nine, who is concerned about the progress of his older son. (Adler: In this case the older boy was the only child for two years. As such, he was probably the center of attention and pampered. Suddenly a second child appears, and the situation changes completely. Engraved on his soul is the notion, "Suddenly someone comes and takes everything from me.") In my opinion the older boy is slow in learning. (Adler: This is the hesitant attitude. We can deduce from this that the boy believes he cannot make any progress; he has lost his courage. He knows that he can't get ahead on the useful side of life. His striving for recognition will be manifested on the useless side. In a twisted way, he has achieved what he always wanted: to attract more attention, to have others spend more of their time on him. Laziness indicates a low opinion of oneself. It also contains the striving to gain recognition. Lazy children are usually the center of attention. The least bit of good work he does is immediately praised. If he does not do well, he is told, "If you weren't lazy, you could be the best.")

No exhortations, whether kindly or severe, have so far yielded any results. (Adler: The boy does not know what is happening inside him. He is acting in accordance with his own style of life. He is like a man in a trap. Certain children will take thrashings willingly, because they can then experience the triumph of having irritated their fathers.)

The saddest thing in the lives of both children is that they spend the day in a children's home. The headmistress has a particular animosity against

my oldest child, since she is an ardent religionist and we do not belong to any church. She told me that he lied, and was sly and lazy, and that this was because he had been reared outside the church. (Adler: These attitudes are brought about by his lack of hope. He can be improved only if he is encouraged.)

To tell the truth, I myself have found that he has all these bad character traits, whereas the younger boy has no faults, and people say only good things about him. (Adler: All these things show that the older boy has been pushed into the background by his younger brother. The more friendship and love he loses, the more discouraged he becomes. The younger boy, who is at present the victor, is aware that he is in a pleasant situation, and he has no need to attract unfavorable attention.)

Chapter XIII: Lying: A Way of Gaining Recognition focuses on the report written by a mother who is already somewhat familiar with IP. She is concerned about her nine-year-old son who is a “problem child.” He is restless and doesn't learn anything in school. (Adler: The boy does not feel equal to the requirements of school, and hence makes no effort there.) However, he isn't stupid, and can surprise people with his good judgment. (Adler: He has the ability to take on other problems. But we cannot count him among the courageous children. We know that such children have little interest in others, but a great deal in themselves.)

He remembers everything adults say. (Adler: Here we see clearly his striving for recognition – his desire to be big.) And he can repeat it accurately, at just the right time. But he is cowardly. He is afraid of everything, and he runs away from any kind of danger. (Adler: He has no self-confidence whatsoever. We may assume that the mother plays an important role. He is not independent; he does not try to solve his own problems. Moreover, he has no intention of facing them, since so far he has been used to having his mother stand behind him. He is a pampered child.) He knows very well that cowardice is something ugly, and now he makes up the worst kind of lies. (Adler: He is urged on to make a grand appearance, to be recognized and esteemed. Since we know he likes to listen to what adults say, in his lies he will play the hero.)

He always wants to play the role of hero. He wants to be the person everybody admires and who can do everything. If he says, “Today at school nobody knew anything but me,” I am certain that things went badly at school. And this is confirmed regularly. (Adler: I would like to

clarify his mode of compensating. He seems to compensate in his imagination. He does not become active in his compensation. This is another example of being cowardly. He is used to being helped by his mother who does everything for him.)

I don't punish him. I love him with all my heart. But he lies more and he is afraid his lies will be discovered. (Adler: He became a liar in order to represent something. He cannot give up his lying and run the risk of appearing to be a “zero” – a negligible quantity. What he will do in fact is to have recourse to more subtle lies.) My husband says I spoil him. (Adler: Merely to say that the child is pampered does not mean that anything has yet been accomplished. People don't know what to do with this word.)

He is not bad. On the contrary he is good-hearted. He even gives his belongings to other children for no other reason than to gain their favor. (Adler: You can see that this kindness involves a streak of egotism. He tries to bribe other children in order to be pampered by them.) Should I be severe? I don't believe this brings results. He cries, and promises everything; and then ten minutes later he has forgotten all about it. (Adler: The mother has tried to be strict, but obviously without result, since the only possible method was to make him understand the mistakes he makes in building his style of life. Practically, this means: to make him independent and autonomous; to awaken his self-confidence. So long as this is not done, either severity or kindness seems useless, although we prefer kindness. This boy is not prepared. It is cruel to demand something from someone for which he has not prepared.)

Highlights from Adler's concluding remarks: It is as though he were trying to stand on tiptoe. You can understand how wrong it is to hand out severe punishment for this attempt, which results from a real need. The only thing which will prove fruitful is explanation. “You don't have to run away, you don't have to resort to lies, you don't have to brag. If you really want to make an effort, you can satisfy your strivings for recognition by doing useful things, and you won't have to resort to foolish tricks.”

Chapter XIV: The Hero Role in Fantasy: A Substitute for Useful Accomplishment in Reality is based on a teacher's report about a nine-year-old boy who manifests aggressive behavior, has trouble with arithmetic, and now does remedial work in this subject. He likes these

special classes very much. (Adler: Perhaps the teacher is very kind. Perhaps the child finds in these classes the conditions he demands of classroom work; namely, that he be pampered.) He likes to have special attention paid to him. He asks for help when getting dressed. He never comes to school or goes home alone. Yet he is big and well developed for his age. He has red hair. (Adler: We know that red hair exposes children to teasing which is painful to them.)

If he does a job poorly and his mother criticizes him, he becomes furious. (Adler: This means that he has been able to establish between himself and his mother a relationship which makes her dependent. He achieves this by means of his rage, or perhaps also by being spanked.) At first he seemed very depressed at school. (Adler: He was looking for a situation in which he could make others pamper him. He wanted to be the center of attention, to control things.)

He has a fertile imagination. (Adler: We can conclude from this that he is not on good terms with the inhibiting reality. He builds for himself an imaginary world in which he lives at ease. There he finds tranquility, he is powerful, he can satisfy his desire to give orders.) Sometimes his imagination runs away with him. He will tell his mother of imaginary events at school, and at the end he will say, "You know, mama, that didn't really happen. I made it up." (Adler: Here we find a small amount of social feeling. He doesn't want to be taken for a liar. . . . The things this boy imagines and then tells about prove that he wants to stand on tip-toe and appear bigger than he is. We can conclude from this that he has a depressing feeling of inferiority, which agrees with the designation of pampered child that we gave him.)

He is afraid of the dark. (Adler: To be afraid of the dark means: someone has to stay near me.) He showed his pity one day when his sister was hurt in the head. (Adler: Here again we also see a certain amount of social feeling, and that he is capable of behaving with humanity.) If he wants something and doesn't get it, he cries until his desire is satisfied. (Adler: He knows that his tears make an impression. We find this trait in many children and adults. They believe that their tears are an invincible weapon. Also, there are people who cannot bear to see someone cry. They must either satisfy the desire of the one who cries, or else they themselves show signs of extreme agitation. Either one suffices for the person who is crying.)

He practices his hero roles in front of the mirror. He brandishes his wooden sword in front of the mirror. And when he is through, he says with satisfaction, "Now everything has been smashed." Highlights from Adler's final comments: Here we see the same trait we have found in many children. They train themselves in a particular aptitude, and identify with a situation. They behave as if they were really playing the role of hero. . . . Knowing that he approached life with a pampered style, and that he assimilates everything in accordance with such a style, we should say: He is behaving in a perfectly intelligent fashion. There is no mistake in what he is doing. We say this because we can identify with him. If I were in this boy's place, I would experience exactly the same difficulties, and I would probably behave in the same way. This proves that the boy is neither retarded nor guilty. He is in a difficult situation, with no way out.

We must show him that a person who always tries to be the center of attention will always be exposed to being hurt. He must seek satisfaction on the useful side of life. . . . Also, he should consider the attacks he undergoes because of his red hair as a sign of stupidity on the part of the one who launches them. . . . The most important thing is to make the boy independent, and to encourage him.

In **Chapter XV: The Trouble-Makers**, Adler presents the cases of two boys who are good friends, and make trouble by calling attention to themselves at any cost. They have to be in separate classrooms because together they make teaching impossible. G is eight years old and S is seven.

The son of an alcoholic, G has three older brothers and one younger brother. There is a great deal of quarreling and fighting at home. The mother cannot do anything to influence G, as he is his father's favorite and the father defends him against everyone. The principal means of education in the home are promises of money and monetary rewards. G's aptitudes are below average, he doesn't work hard, rarely turns in assignments, and has had to repeat a year of school. The only subjects he participates in voluntarily are drawing and penmanship, but horses are his real interest.

He does everything possible to draw attention to himself at school, such as: shouting and fighting, hitting and kicking classmates and tearing up their clothes, singing in class, using vulgar language, and commenting on

what other children say. He is brutal toward both human beings and animals.

Adler's comments: This boy does not cooperate at school. If we consider only his behavior, his movements, and his attitude toward the demands of school, we can say that he is in the process of excluding and rejecting all demands. The reason for this is that he does not believe that he can accomplish anything. This motive strikes me as sufficient. Because if I had to identify with this boy and imagine that I could never succeed at anything, but that I was nonetheless compelled to go to school, I would act the same way. Now if we could suddenly capture this boy's attention and explain to him that he could do everything very well, that he is wrong in believing he is good only for the stable and not for school, and if we could come to his aid personally and help him succeed, we might be able to kindle his interest in school.

The only way he could be helped would be by putting him in care of someone who could give him attention. I am thinking of the function of a kindly older brother who could win the boy over and instill some courage in him.

In the case of seven-year-old S, up to the time he entered school, his father doted on him. He behaved badly. He would run away and not come home until late at night, and the mother couldn't do anything with him. Last year, a little girl was born, provoking the boy's jealousy. When the mother threatens to put him in a corrective institution, he says he would rather be there than at home.

The parents are very strict about seeing that he does his assignments. His aptitudes are above average, but he is a careless worker who also finds a variety of ways to disrupt the classroom. He interrupts the teacher, hits other students, throws books at them or hits them in the face with his gym shoes. Also, he lies down on his desk, throws chestnuts in the classroom, whistles and sings, and comments on what others say. He likes to brag, and accuses schoolmates of the wrongs he has committed.

Feeling that the boy was badly in need of love, the teacher suggested to the mother that she try to improve things by showing her son more affection, rather than the spankings she gives him at present. She replied that at her house, things were not done that way.

At school, they have tried everything to change these two boys, with varying success and no permanent improvement. "One can sometimes reason with S, but G merely finds it amusing."

Adler's comments: S is more pampered by the father than by the mother. His relationship with his mother is strained, since she has not been able to win him over. On the basis of her reply to the teacher's suggestion that she show the child more love instead of hitting him, we may suppose that the woman is hard and cold. More serious things may have happened.

His intelligence does not seem to be the problem. His behavior at school can be explained from another point of view. He longs for affection. He wants to be pampered. He has experienced what it is to be the center of attention. For six years he was an only child, indulged by everyone, as is always the case with an only child. These pampered children in general are not courageous; they prefer to shine in an easier situation. By comparison with his former situation, this boy feels frustrated both at home and at school.

He should be made to understand that it is not always necessary to be the center of attention, and that he is not being slighted when people pay attention to someone else. If he wants always to be the center of attention, he must cooperate. If a stranger tells him that, he will think about it. It makes more of an impression. If we make school unpleasant for him by punishment, it is possible that he will not go to school any more.

It requires some experience to be able to talk to parents or children. It is not merely a question of explaining things in simple words: It is an artistic, dramatic talk we face here. As psychologist and educator, we find ourselves cast in a certain role, with a definite purpose in mind. You cannot compare this with anything else. We must create an impression, an impression we otherwise find only in art. It is very effective both on adults and children.

In **Chapter XVI: The Struggle for the Lost Paradise**, Adler reads and comments on the case history of a five-year-old boy who is difficult to handle. He is hyperactive, likes to break things, and has outbursts of rage. He climbs up on the best table in his dirty shoes, plunges his hand into a cake and then stuffs his mouth with it, pushes guests out of their chairs and sits in their place. He has fits of anger when he doesn't get

what he wants. When the mother slaps him, he laughs and is quiet for a few minutes. The mother and father are always exhausted, but the boy never is.

Adler: If he misses being the center of attention so much, it indicates that he has been there in the past, and that he wants to restore this situation. What event aggravated him so much? Perhaps a younger child was born.

He finds a way to fight and cause trouble, proving that he doesn't like others. Here we see a lack of social feeling. It appears that the mother raised him only for herself. It is very important how we interpret these relationships. We can speak of understanding when we know that we are dealing here with only a part of the whole. This is not a physiological process. To understand means to grasp the relationship of all things.

Chapter XVII: Stealing Because of Lost Affection focuses on a twelve-year-old boy whose father was a traveling salesman. (Adler: This fact is important. We have often found that the mother, due to the father's frequent absences, cannot fulfill her second function; namely, to guide the child's social interest toward other people, and particularly toward the father. This is generally true when the father is seldom at home.) The boy used to be obedient, quiet, and sweet . . . (Adler: Which means to us that he was very attached to his mother.) . . . attached by a great love to his mother, and even more to his father, who was gentle and good. Soon, the family moved and the father started a small business for the mother and one of his younger brothers. (Adler: Since the mother was undertaking a new occupation, the situation deteriorated for the child, because the mother now no longer had so much time to pamper him and make him the center of attention.)

He stole neckties from his parents' shop . . . (Adler: The child probably had the feeling that he had been robbed of something. The father travels, the mother is at the store, and the boy has no one to care for him. This gives him the feeling of being deprived.) . . . in order to give them to the apprentice painter who lived in the building. He also stole roses from a nearby park, either to bring them home, or to give them to a very pretty aunt whom he loved very much. (Adler: Like many children who feel they have been robbed of something, he has begun to bribe others with gifts to win their love and affection. This is one of the commonest motives for theft among children.)

The following year the father had to start serving the prison term to which he had been sentenced for his fraudulent bankruptcy. No one ever talked to the boy about this event. He regarded it as a deep humiliation. Nonetheless, he made a good start at another school. (Adler: Our only apprehension is: What will happen if he cannot secure for himself, at school, a situation wherein he is appreciated?)

The father was brought home seriously ill. At the age of forty, he had had a stroke and become paralyzed on the left side of his body. The physical breakdown of this man, who up to that time had been perfectly healthy, must certainly have been due to the nervous strain of his bankruptcy, and his regrets about not being able to care for his family. (Adler: Here the report ends, and we are left with our speculations. If the boy feels at ease at school, he will overcome his difficulties. We know that he has a style of life manifested by his need to find someone to whom he can be very close. If he finds a favorable situation in which someone gives him time and attention, he may very well go through life without giving anyone grounds for reproof. . . . I am not displeased at having had to exert myself on a fragmentary report and to have tested on our knowledge on it. The same thing holds true in life, when we meet individuals about whom we have only fragmentary knowledge so that we must divine the rest.)

Chapter XVIII: The Bed-Wetter is about twelve-year-old Emil who suffers from enuresis. (Adler: The boy expresses himself through his enuresis. It is just as though he were speaking “bladder language.” Here the language means, “I am not far enough advanced yet. I still have to be watched over.” The child gives his mother extra work. An enuretic child is a type of pampered child. When we see such an effort to be pampered even more, we know that the boy has been having some difficulty in maintaining his contact. He has the impression that he is not getting enough love. He probably has a younger brother or sister. We must find out why he is less pampered now than before. He has a fictitious goal: to be pampered, to have someone at his beck and call. We must change this goal and show him another one, so that he can make himself useful.)

He often loses control of his bowels. (Adler: He is struggling under conditions of complete discouragement.) He is an illegitimate child. His father was killed in the war, and his mother remarried. Two children have been born of this second marriage: a boy, eight years old and a girl of six. (Adler: Previously, I was talking about an accusation; our

interpretation was accurate. Even when children are well treated, they feel these details distinctly. When there are other children, they feel that the latter are given more attention and care.)

The stepfather was very severe with him at first. During most of his childhood, the boy has been far from home, either at his aunt's house or at the orphan's home. He had to repeat the first and third grades of primary school. (Adler: This corroborates our hypothesis that he suffered from tension and was not adequately prepared. He took one more step toward hopelessness.) He has friends. (Adler: He is beginning to regain hope and look at life with more courage.) He often makes faces, in school or outside. (Adler: These grimaces, too, are again a form of expression which we may consider a language. He says, "Look at me!" He is playing a role in order to attract the attention of others, just as we find in his wetting and dirtying himself.)

Owing to the fact that his upper jaw overrides his lower one strongly, and that he almost constantly keeps his mouth open, he gives an impression of stupidity. (Adler: His stupid appearance must have contributed to his being disliked. We must encourage the boy so that he can have some success. We should propose a goal for him, making sure it is one he can achieve. If we succeed here in creating in him a friendlier attitude, he himself will make an effort to avoid annoying others.)

Dr. A. (to the mother): We would like to talk to you about your boy How is he doing at school?

The mother: He has been trying hard lately.

Dr. A.: Has he already said what he would like to be in life?

The mother: He'd like to be an electrician.

Dr. A.: He already has ambition? Does he make himself useful around the house?

The mother: Yes.

Dr. A.: Where does he sleep?

The mother: He sleeps in my room. I think my son is afraid of my second husband, and he is afraid of everything.

Dr. A.: Couldn't you convince your husband that he should behave so that the child will no longer be afraid of him? He is a nice boy, and he needs to be treated with tenderness and kindness. Something good can be made out of him. . . . What position does he sleep in at night?

The mother: He sleeps on his stomach.

Dr. A.: He is turning away from life and hiding.

The mother: He puts the covers over his head. Ever since he came back from the orphans' home, he has been afraid.

Dr.A.: Try not to criticize him or scold him. I would tell him, "You are a capable boy." I would praise him and show him that I love him. A child like this needs proof of affection. (The mother leaves.)

Dr.A. (to the boy): Hello, there! How are you doing at school? What would you like to become?

Emil: A mechanic.

Dr. A.: How is your drawing?

Emil: Pretty good.

Dr. A.: You can become a good mechanic, but you must have courage. You must not be afraid. Do you want to learn how not to be afraid? You are already a big boy; you're not a baby any more. Even when you get a bad mark, you shouldn't be afraid. I had bad grades once, too. But then I went at my lessons harder, and things went better. You must try to make progress. Come back in a month and tell me how you are, if you have more courage. Try it, then tell me if you have been able to do it. (Emil leaves.)

Adler: For the time being, all we can do is encourage him. If we talk to him about his faults, we won't encourage him. If he comes back in a month and we can see that he is making progress, then we can go into the question of his faults.

Chapter XIX: Enuresis: A Means of Attachment focuses on another twelve-year-old boy suffering from enuresis. (Adler: This is a rebellious child. Probably he was pampered at one time and something has changed that favorable situation.) He often wets himself in the daytime. (Adler: He is not content to disturb others at night, but does it in the daytime as well.) When his mother is with him, or when he is at school, he never wets himself. (Adler: This indicates that his enuresis is motivated by psychic factors. When his mother is near him, he does not have to try to attract her to him. It is likely that he also feels at ease at school.)

The mother is divorced. He lives with his grandparents. (Adler: We must be remember that grandparents usually pamper their grandchildren. However, if the mother spoils the child, the grandmother reproaches her for it. But if the mother does not spoil the child, the grandmother does.) The boy used to sleep in his parents' bedroom. (Adler: This proves that he was spoiled at one time either because he was able to get close to his mother through his own efforts, or because the parents always wanted to have him with them.) Now he sleeps alone. (Adler: This fact is important. If he were sleeping in his mother's bed, he would not wet himself.) He is very pampered by his grandparents.

When he was ten years old, he entered the third grade in the special remedial school. Now he is in the fourth grade of that school. (Adler: Remedial school represents a further accentuation of inferiority. Only if the boy is mentally deficient will he not notice that he is among backward children.) He does good work at school. If the teacher calls on other students, he answers aloud. (Adler: We can conclude from this that he is an intelligent boy. This pampered child would like to put himself into the foreground. His bed-wetting is another means of achieving this.) Even when he is playing with the other children, he must always play the leading role. (Adler: He has his own life style, something you will not find in retarded children. He does not belong in the remedial school.)

He is very fond of playing the clown. (Adler: This is a frequent manifestation in children with a strong feeling of inferiority, who want to be the center of attention. We often find three coordinated manifestations in such children: enuresis, the need to interrupt others, and clowning. A person who has confidence in himself does not behave like this.)

His right leg is stiff. But he likes gymnastics very much, and he has been able to get permission to take part in exercises, as far as his leg allows him to. (Adler: This confirms once again a fundamental thesis of IP; namely, that the best results are obtained by a special interest provoked by an organic inferiority. . . . We must try to make the child more independent and more courageous; and by means of supplementary lessons, he must be brought up to the point where he is capable of going to regular school again. As soon as he begins to succeed, and in proportion as he does so, his bad habits will cease to have a reason for being. We must show him a better way.)

In **Chapter XX: The Child with Brilliant Siblings**, Adler reads and comments on a case report probably written by the parents. The subject is a seventeen-year-old boy who had many childhood diseases, including diphtheria. During his convalescence, he developed nervous troubles: he shook his shoulders, rubbed his hands against his thighs, and talked with extreme rapidity. (Adler: From the manner in which this report was drawn up, we can see the relationship of the parents to us. They want to give us the impression that the child has suffered a great deal. While we may consider these symptoms as nervous troubles, they are not the familiar results of diphtheria. We must introduce our principal theme: What effects does this behavior have on others? This is not the most courageous way of putting oneself at the center of attention.)

The boy's father also suffered from timidity when he was a child, but to a lesser extent. (Adler: Here we can read between the lines that the child also suffers from timidity. His timidity means "staying on the sidelines," being reluctant to join in with others. On the basis of this movement you can see what is involved here: he is a child who believes himself capable of nothing.) The other children do not suffer from this timidity. (Adler: When we hear that the other children are not so timid, we can assume that they do not have such a marked feeling of inferiority.)

The oldest boy is finishing his studies at the university. (Adler: We shall try to find out whether this comment means: "This boy couldn't go that far." If this is what he has been made to feel, we shall have the necessary information to establish why he feels so inferior.) The youngest boy is especially gifted. Two years ago, at the age of fifteen, he died suddenly of meningitis. (Adler: Now we have some information on the age of our subject: he is more than seventeen years old. He is old enough so that the question of college has come up already. But in this report we find that

the presentation has the aim of persuading us that the boy is backward and cannot be compared to the other two.

The boy did not do very good work at school. (Adler: This boy is not mentally deficient. Everything that happens is a result of his style of life. There is obviously intelligence and reason in his behavior.) He has had to repeat a year of school on two occasions. (Adler: This setback probably didn't do much to encourage him. In general, we find that being left back does damage to the child in the long run.) He was allowed to stay in school until the age of sixteen, which permitted him to finish all three years of trade school. (Adler: He is a second child. He tries in every way to secure for himself the right of seniority. There is only one way for him to dethrone an older brother who is so capable: to come into closer contact with his parents to win them over to his side by means which are essentially useless. The second child has this character trait: he presses forward as if in a race. Can we find signs of such a race here? The boy speaks very rapidly. He wants to get ahead of others by means of speech.)

When he finished school, he became an apprentice pastry-cook. (Adler: Once again we see the wide gap. You only have to understand what it means to have a brother who is a college student while you are an apprentice pastry-cook.) He suffers terrible anxiety if he is faced with difficult problems. (Adler: You can see how he is weighed down by his feeling of inferiority and his discouragement.)

Recently the boy passed his apprentice's examination brilliantly. But his parents are very apprehensive about the future. They are convinced that the boy cannot cope with the demands of his trade and the work it requires. (Adler: Despite the fact that he passed the apprentice's examination with honors. There are certainly not many parents who would have apprehensions in such a case. This boy seems always to have been the object of his parents' worries. It is probably the very attitude which contributed to the boy's discouragement. They never believed he was capable of anything. He should have been encouraged. The best way to do this would be to enlighten him as to his errors.)

Adler's final comments: This boy must realize that he is not making progress in life because he was very pampered. He must realize himself that he approaches everything with the question: What will this bring me? That he is seeking warmth and appreciation, and help from others. It

is not so very difficult to make a person understand this. If we go at it with the proper psychological tact and grasp the problem with the artist's intuition, we will succeed.

Someone must explain to him that he can succeed in everything, provided he trains himself adequately. The mother and father must not persist in saying, "You will never succeed at anything." He can be encouraged to the point where he will be able to "beat" his brother. He who overcomes difficulties will win.

Chapter XXI: How I Talk to Parents consists of Adler's suggestions for how educators and mental health professionals can talk to parents and children most effectively. He emphasizes the importance of first winning them over emotionally, so they will listen. Dogmatic lectures are not appropriate.

"The first thing is to win the confidence of the parents. We must not antagonize them. When parents come to us for consultation, it is because they feel responsible. They expect to be criticized. Above all, we must relieve them of this fear. Usually I tell parents, 'It seems to me that you are on the right track,' even when I am convinced of the contrary. I recommend the use of 'perhaps,' or 'I think that would work very well.' We are not in a position to treat the parents, too. It is impossible to modify a deeply-rooted system with a few words."

With the children, we must introduce them to a new atmosphere "where they may realize that they are not considered to be hopelessly lost." But helping them correct their error in giving up hope is only the beginning. We must uncover the style of life which is causing the difficulties, and this is no easy task. "It is an art to win someone over, to awaken certain feelings in him, to induce him to listen, and understand what is said to him. This art is indispensable when working with children. Those who have good contact with people will have an easier task, since in their daily dealings with people they have learned how to make themselves understood. This is the primary task of the counselor in IP."

In Chapter XXII: The Task of the Kindergarten, Adler addresses kindergarten teachers. Their task is a crucial one because the child's style of life is fixed by the first four or five years. "It was formerly believed that a child's behavior varied in accordance with situations and different ages. A green fruit differs in appearance from a ripe fruit. However, an

expert can tell what it will become. This unripe fruit is more than an unfolding entity. It represents something alive, striving, with a psychic movement which tends toward an ideal form, and which will face the tasks of life from this fixed vantage point, and will have to come to terms with them.”

The kindergarten teacher's job is to help the child develop a healthy style of life, one that will enable him to solve the inevitable tasks ahead. The foundation of this healthy attitude is sociability, in the sense of an awareness of the needs of others. “We must make the child understand that a lack of sociability is the worst error that he can commit in life,” because all his difficulties, now and in the future, will flow from that deficiency.

The depth of the child's feeling of connectedness with others will be reflected in every aspect of his growth and learning. Speech is one example. “The voice is the link between one human being and another. If this link is not completely developed, speech will not develop well.” The poverty or richness of an individual's vocabulary reflects the poverty or richness of his social relationships. Even intelligence is linked to social interest. “Intelligence is not a private affair. It has general validity. It cannot be fashioned according to a personal point of view. Problem children have private ideas which we do not consider reasonable. They do not correspond to common sense,” as in private logic.

“Kindergarten is an extension of the family. It must accomplish and correct those things which have not been done in the family, owing to poor understanding or old traditions.” Adler then describes specific strategies for the teacher to use with hated or pampered children; the ones who are weak, sickly, or have organic deficiencies; the mentally deficient; and the left-handed. He also explains the importance of knowing each child's position of birth in the family, and the possible pitfalls of each position.

Fighting with children is futile, because “they are always the stronger ones. They do not take any responsibility. And he who assumes responsibility is never the stronger one.”

He concludes with emphasizing that the most dangerous thing is if children lose hope. We must focus on building their courage in the face of difficulties, and their hope for a positive future based on social

interest. Thus, Adler's philosophy of life, pedagogy, and psychology are again inseparably interconnected.

Part 2: *The Pattern of Life.*

The Pattern of Life (1930) includes transcriptions of Adler's case readings and demonstration interviews with adults, children, and parents, originally held at the New School of Social Research in New York City in 1929.

Ch I: A Gesture of the Whole Body focuses on a twenty-five-year old woman, Miss Flora, who for years has been subject to attacks of unconsciousness. She lives with her mother, father, two younger and two older brothers, and two young children. An only girl, the client has always had her own way and has been favored by the father. Adler begins his case study with some reflections on the concept of epilepsy, pointing out that we must be extremely careful in the diagnosis of this ailment. He presents some technical details that help to differentiate organically based epilepsy from psychologically conditioned problems.

Before reading any further in the case report, Adler suggests that as an only girl in a family of brothers, Miss Flora is most likely overindulged and very obedient, but not self-confident or independent. She probably cannot stay alone.

Then he returns to the case report: Since her first attack, she sleeps with her mother. (Adler: Here is evidence that she not only refuses to be alone, but that her first attack served to accentuate her dependence. This point leads me to believe that the so-called epilepsy is premeditated.) The patient's health had been perfectly normal. Her mother says that she is almost perfect in every way. (Adler: The mother's remark about Flora's perfection corroborates my belief that she is a sweet, obedient young woman. She is also a spoiled child and it is high time she should be made independent. Such independence would be of great advantage to her; it is, in fact, her only hope of a cure.)

While she was at school, she wanted to be a teacher, but gave up her ambition because of the extra effort that was required. (Adler: Here again we see that she lacks self-confidence and will make no effort to become

independent.) Her attacks occurred at several times of tension for her. First, when Flora was eighteen, her mother went off on an overnight visit, leaving the girl alone for the first time in her life. Then, the attacks have come every month at the time of her menstrual period. The attacks have increased recently since her engagement. But she now loves a second boy.

The first boy knows nothing of his rival, and says he wants to wait until Flora is well. She says, "I would marry, if I did not have these attacks." (Adler: Now it is a rule that two boys are less than one, and we can understand how being in love with two men defers the question of marrying one of them. Her goal in life is to escape the problem of love and she realizes her goal, not only by dividing her love interests, but by exaggerating her fainting spells to demonstrate that she is not responsible. But you must not believe that these actions are conscious or malicious. She is sick, and it is a part of her pattern of life to be unconscious of the real meaning of her attacks.)

Flora enters the room. A brief excerpt of the interview follows.

Dr. A.: Can you tell me something that you remember from your early childhood? Perhaps you can remember what you like and disliked.

Flora: I suppose I liked outdoor sports.

Dr. A.: Which sports did you like best?

Flora: Skating, sliding downhill, and climbing trees.

Dr. A.: You must have been a very brave girl.

Flora: I had to be. I had four brothers to contend with.

Dr. A.: Do you remember wishing you were a boy?

Flora: No, I don't think I ever wanted to be a boy, but I always played with boys because there were no girls to associate with.

Dr. A.: I think if you speak with your teacher who has brought in the history, she will tell you why you have become so very sensitive. You are a person who easily gets in a state of great tension, and you have

these fainting spells to demonstrate your weakness. They occur only when you have been crossed or criticized. I believe that your health will be improved if you are more courageous and if you realize that you need not always contend with your brothers. There are better ways to live than always being in a position of complete powerlessness. Wouldn't you like to try another way?

Flora: Yes, of course. Do you mean that if I am courageous, I can cure my attacks?

Dr. A.: Yes.

Flora: Well, I am willing to try anything.

Ch II: Maternal Domination is about eleven-year-old Robert. The school report states that he is retarded, but Adler questions this assessment. According to the report: The boy is retarded in school; he is in the third grade and has a very low intelligence quotient. He is quiet and docile in his class. In the past he has always been slow and timid and did not learn to speak until very late. (Adler: Sometimes normal children are also slow and timid, especially if they are left-handed. Where the mental defect is profound, they do not learn to speak at all. On the other hand, some spoiled children do not talk until late. In this case, we must look for one of two patterns: either that of a retarded child, or that of a spoiled child.)

There are two older sisters, sixteen and fourteen. The parents are congenial, but the mother dominates the home. She says that the father favors the elder girl, but that the boy has been closer to her. (Adler: You see that he has a certain advantage in being the only boy and the baby of the family. I have not seen many happy marriages in which one parent or the other dominated the home. When the mother says that the boy is closer to her, she does not express herself fully. She probably might add, "I have spoiled him.") Both girls are in high school and are very bright. (Adler: When one child in the family is very bright, we can usually look for difficulties with the other children. An overindulged child is easily discouraged, and it may be that this is the trouble with Robert. This gives us a little hope, because it is easier to discourage an intelligent child than a retarded one.) Entrance to school is gained by a competitive examination, and the record of his two sisters was held up to the boy. (Adler: This corroborates our point very satisfactorily.)

The father takes a negative attitude toward the child. He believes that the boy was born this way and will always be this way. The mother says, "He is our only boy, the baby, and it was such a blow to find out that he was not like the others." (Adler: The father's hopelessness is discouraging, because very often a child develops according to his father's opinion of him. On this account particularly, it will be our duty to encourage the child and let him feel that there is hope for his normal development. His position in the family has been very circumscribed: on the one hand, he is too closely connected with his mother and dependent on her for support; on the other hand, he cannot compete with the two older girls, who are brighter than he is. You might compare it with three trees growing in a narrow place – if two of the trees have overcome the difficulties and grown strong, the third tree cannot grow freely.)

The boy sleeps with his face to the wall and sometimes curls up. (Adler: His sleep attitude seems to say, "I am not courageous. I do not want to see anything." When he curls up, it means that he would like to disappear, or roll himself into a ball like a hedgehog, so as to offer no exposure to the enemy.) The father sleeps in the same room with the boy, and the mother says that she must sometimes lie down with the boy and quiet him until he falls asleep. (Adler: The latter point is important because it shows that the boy is very fearful and demands that his mother support him in his timidity. He does not want to function as an independent being, and regulates his behavior to compel his mother's attention.)

The boy began to talk at the age of five. (Adler: It is not uncommon for children whose whims have all been gratified not to talk until after the fourth year.) He learned to dress himself about a year and a half ago. He has to be constantly urged to dress himself, as he dawdles a long time. (Adler: That he did not learn to dress himself until he was ten years old is a certain sign that he has been spoiled. He is not very interested in dressing himself, because he wants his mother to help him.) He writes with his right hand, but does everything else with his left hand. (This is a very important point because it assures us that he is congenitally a left-handed child who has been confronted and discouraged by the problems of adjusting himself to a right-handed world.)

He is very backward in reading. (Adler: It is well known that some left-handed children are slow in reading because they tend to reverse the

letters in the word. A left-handed child whose peculiarity is not recognized experiences a number of failures in school, and eventually is no longer interested, because he cannot compete in reading with right-handed children.) He scores low on intelligence tests, but is very attractive and pleasant and cooperates well in the test. (Adler: The last sentence gives us another reason for his being spoiled and shows also that he is intelligent enough to make capital of his attractiveness.)

Excerpts from Adler's final comments: I would like to explain to this child that some mistakes in his education have been made. I want to encourage him to believe that he can rise to his sisters' level, and explain to him that he has not succeeded because he has been too dependent on his mother and lost confidence in himself. Furthermore, we must speak with the mother and explain to her that he is an intelligent child, but that she will be able to enjoy his intelligence only if she makes him independent.

A student asks Adler: Would you advise corporal punishment for such a child, under any circumstances?

Adler replies: You ought to be convinced that I am entirely against all corporal punishment. The method I use is to learn the circumstances of early childhood, to explain and to persuade. What possible result could you gain by beating such a child? He is not able to read because he has not been properly trained, and spanking would not improve the training. Only those people beat children who do not understand what else to do with them.

In **Chapter III: The Road to Crime**, the case report begins: Carl, age eight years, I.Q. 98, lies to his family, teacher, and other boys. He has committed some thefts, and has been lying and stealing since the age of five. Before this time there was no problem. (Adler: As Carl's average intelligence quotient is 98, we may safely conclude that he is not retarded. Lying is a sign of the child's insecurity and weakness. When we hear of a child who lies, it is wise to learn in the very beginning whether he tells boastful lies or there is someone in the environment of whom he is afraid. We may assume that a crisis in his life occurred in his fifth year. It is probable that he has an inferiority complex and is more interested in himself than in anyone else. He steals, which signifies that he feels humiliated and tries to increase his self-esteem in a useless way.)

The mother told the teacher in confidence that she was never married to the child's father. She was seduced by a friend of her father whom she never saw subsequently, and who never knew that she gave birth to a child. (Adler: It is usually very difficult to develop social interest in an illegitimate child. In our prevailing civilization, illegitimacy is considered a disgrace, and a child with this background is put on the defensive. A large percentage of illegitimate children develop into criminals and drunkards because they have been badly handicapped and are attracted to illicit modes of behavior which seem to promise a short cut to happiness.)

When he was five years old, his mother married. The stepfather has a child of his own, a girl two years older than Carl. (Adler: Carl's trouble began in his fifth year, when his mother married. Probably he felt that the one person with whom he had made an adequate social contact was taken away from him by his mother's husband. The introduction of a sister into the family offered an additional complicating factor. Perhaps this girl was beloved by her father, and a well-behaved child, making the difficulty even greater for Carl. He was only five years old, after all, and his former experience had not been of a kind to develop sufficient courage and strength to face this new situation. So he became a problem child.) There are now two other children, a sister two and one-half and a brother one and one-half years old. (Adler: These two other children narrow his position still further.)

The mother cried the first time she was interviewed by the teacher, and said, "I do not know what to do about Carl." (Adler: We know that it is very bad for a child if his parents are discouraged about him. The child is justified then in losing all hope himself, and when a child lacks hope, the last vestiges of his social interest are lost.) The father beats him with a razor strap when he is bad. (Adler: We have found the severe person whom we presupposed in the environment.)

Recently, he brought the teacher a box of candy. (Adler: From the fact that he tries to bribe his teacher to like him, we may conclude that he was once a spoiled child and remembers the pleasures of being indulged.) A short time later, the teacher noticed that many of his classmates had new toys and some of them money they had received from Carl. (Adler: He wants to bribe his playmates as well as his teacher, and we must conclude that he feels a lack of affection and appreciation.) After many

lies as to where he got the money, he finally confessed that he took it from an aunt who was visiting them.

He masturbates frequently in school. (Adler: Carl wishes to gain the attention of his teacher. When he cannot do it by bribing, he does it by masturbating.) He wets the bed every night of his life. He was deprived of dessert, but it had no effect on his bed-wetting. He went without dessert for six months. He was promised twenty-five cents if he would stop for a week, but he did not stop even for a single night. (Adler: If his pattern demands attention from his mother, none of these methods will cause him to relinquish so important a weapon against her as bed-wetting. He has lost hope of ever winning proper appreciation from his family, but he still knows how to be the center of attention.)

His earliest recollection is that at the age of two he threw his mother's dresser-set out of the window and boys from the street brought it back to the house: "I didn't get punished because I was too young." (Adler: It is interesting to note that Carl's earliest recollection is connected with the idea of punishment. He seems to say that there was a time when he could have avoided punishment, but that he would be punished if he did these things today. We know that there are children who really do not object to being beaten. When you beat them, they simply say to themselves, "I must be more cunning and not be discovered." This is excellent training for a career of crime, which is precisely what we are afraid of in this case.)

It is his ambition to be a doctor. His oldest sister is going to be a nurse, and he wants to be in the same hospital. (Adler: His real ambition is to be ahead of everyone else with the least effort, and his desire to be a doctor is his method of making his ambition concrete. It is the typical striving of the second child to surpass the older child. Obviously, the boy is on the defensive, and our treatment must be directed toward making him feel that he is the equal of his brother and sisters and not under-valued by his family. We can do this only by explaining that he can win more significance by good behavior than by bad.

The father must be taught to conciliate the child, rather than punishing him with a razor strap. We must explain to the mother the circumstances that make it possible for Carl to feel he is neglected. The mother is the important member of the family to influence, because it will be easier for her to make him feel appreciated. This case gives a very good idea of the

origin of criminality in the family situation. It is entirely useless to wait until a boy has committed a robbery before we consider him a criminal. This is the point at which we should start.)

Chapter IV: Wanting to Lead is about eight-year-old John who has difficulties with other children, loves to fight all the time, disturbs the class, and tries to be noticed by acting silly. He constantly wants to be in the limelight. (Adler: If a boy has difficulties with other children, it is probable that he lacks social interest, and if he fights to gain attention, we may presume that he is not brave enough to face the problems of life in a useful way.) The parents have always had as much trouble with him at home as his teachers have at school. He is very mischievous and does not obey orders. (Adler: As John's behavior at home and at school is identical, he evidently considers the two situations to be similar. We may conclude, therefore, that he is properly appreciated neither in the home nor at school. That he is very mischievous and does not obey orders promptly is not astonishing, because we cannot expect a rebel to be obedient – that would be a contradiction.)

The family constellation consists of a father, a mother, the patient, and a younger sister almost three years old. (Adler: This is a very familiar constellation. The boy is nearly nine and there was a long period during which he was the only child.) The father is the only one the boy obeys. Formerly, he was extremely strict with him and punished him severely when he did wrong. (Adler: If John obeys only his father, then it is probable that the mother is weak and the child chooses her to attack. Punishment is the best way I know to stunt the social feeling.)

He is mischievous and troublesome when left alone with his mother. She is very nervous, and he makes her unhappy because he will not obey her. She can do nothing with him. Therefore, the father takes entire charge of the training and discipline of the boy. (Adler: John's mother is unwise to complain in front of him. The child is always the stronger, and there is no use in fighting stronger people. Perhaps she demands too much of him. There should be a comradeship relationship between parents and children. I have seen too many parents who insisted on blind, unreasoning obedience. This mother's behavior is that of a person without hope who has declared her intellectual bankruptcy to the child and turned the whole matter over to his father.)

He often is late to school because of his slow dressing or because he stops at newsstands and reads the headlines. (Adler: If John wanted to get to school on time he would dress quickly enough, but school is a problem he does not want to face. He is looking for situations in which he can rule, and school is not one of them.) His classmates consider him a great nuisance. He is always annoying, pushing, and stepping on others. He delights in tripping up other children or fighting with any child he is near. I always had him sitting next to my desk. I always had him the first in line so I could control his actions. (Adler: It is quite evident that John has won his point and considers himself the conqueror of the teacher.)

The father is very anxious for John to get good marks in conduct. He brings home a conduct card every day, and the father bribes him to be good. He has organized a system of cash payments for good behavior. Recently, John brought home a D in conduct; his father scolded him and gave him a slight taste of how the rolling-pin felt by administering a few light taps and promised him a severe whipping if he got a D again. Unfortunately, John returned that very day with another D. (Adler: The father, for all his good intentions, is only working on the surface. It is impossible to bribe a boy to be good, if his pattern demands non-conformity. And it must be evident to everyone that, for this child, corporal punishment is worse than useless.)

Excerpts from Adler's final comments: John fights because it is the only way he knows to gain significance. From this point, we must proceed in the therapy. We shall speak to the parents, and advise the father not to whip him, but to make a companion of him. It would be a good thing for them to take a trip together and try to understand each other. It is of the greatest importance to make the boy and the parents realize that John's goal is to gain attention. It will be more difficult with the boy, and it make take some time before we can convince him about his own aim in life.

A student asks: If this child's goal is in his unconscious, how can he be rational about it?

Adler's response: We proceed by holding up a mirror to his soul; we enable him to see his attitude and compare it with other pictures that we make. If we are successful in making him see himself as he actually is, the time will come when he will think of this while he is misbehaving,

and his procedure will be weakened. And once he has completely understood the reasons for his behavior, he will be a different boy.

In the interview with the boy, Adler tells John that he is intelligent, and that he needs courage in order to make a change in his life: To disturb people in order to be the center of attention is very cowardly. It is much braver to help other people. Are you brave enough to try it? How long do you think it will take you to become one of the best-behaved pupils in the class? I feel sure that you are bright enough to do it in two weeks. Will you come and see me again in two weeks and tell me how you are getting along?

In **Ch V: The Fear of Growing Up**, Adler introduces the case history of six-year-old George, who uses baby talk, grimaces, and clowns, in addition to his other bad habits. Because the boy has an I.Q. of 89, Adler suspects his behavior is not due to a lack of intelligence, but to a useless purpose, most likely the fear of growing up.

The case report begins: The older brother hits George, and says he has terrible manners. (Adler: The “terrible manners” are the manners of a baby. I think they are very artistic. If he is going to act like a baby, he must defend himself like one. It will not be difficult to make George understand that to grow up means to have more power, and that it is better to strive for progress than to look for the paradise of the past.) The older brother and sister do very good work in school, and both are in a high I.Q. group. The younger sister is in a low I.Q. group. George is a handsome blond boy, and the others are dark and not at all attractive. The mother says, “We could not help loving him; he was so blond and cute.” (Adler: Here are more and more corroborations of our theory that he is a pampered child.)

At school the other children like him and enjoy his grimaces. (Adler: Young children are easily pleased and George has trained himself to be amusing.) He often gets into fights with his classmates, pushing them, or talking to children who sit near him. He comes to school looking clean, but soon pulls his stockings down over his shoes and opens his tie. (Adler: These are all tricks of his repertoire as an actor.) He is not clumsy, but pretends to be unable to do things. For instance, if the teacher is watching him, he pretends that he cannot fold his paper, but if she does not look at him, he can do it perfectly. (Adler: Over and over

again we see this boy's goal in life: to make everyone who is kind to him do his bidding. He is trying to prove that he is only a baby.)

It is his ambition to grow up to be a cowboy, because the cowboys he sees in the movies all fight. (Adler: It is very common for disheartened children to play a heroic role in their fantasies. To this boy being a cowboy is an approximation of godlikeness. His ambition shows that he would really like to grow up, if it was made easy for him. In other words, he wants to be a hero under the proper conditions.)

He dreams that a man comes and takes the door of his house away. (Adler: If someone came and took the door of the house away, the house would be open and he would not be protected. The door is a protection and George is very much interested in his defenses.)

After a brief interview with George, Adler sums up the situation for the mother: George has created the role of a baby for himself, probably because he remembers that, as a small child, he was in a very pleasant situation and he wishes to restore it. For this reason he makes trouble for you, forces you to wash and dress him, and to keep him a baby. See that the other children ignore him when he makes faces. When he talks baby talk, act as if you did not hear him, and praise him when he speaks like a grown-up boy. Let him wash and dress himself, even if it takes a long time. When you see him making an effort in the right direction, praise him and say, "I am glad you are a grown-up boy now and no longer a baby." Do not preach to him, but when he talks like a baby, pay no attention to him until he tries to speak correctly.

After the mother leaves, Adler addresses the students: No one can tell a mother all the little tricks that are necessary to cure such a child, but if she understands the total situation, she will know what to do.

A student questions Adler: How can you love a child without indulging him?

Adler: You can love a child all you wish, but you must not make him dependent. You owe it to the child to let him function as an independent being, and you must begin training him from the very beginning to do this. If a child gains the impression that his parents have nothing to do but to be at his beck and call, he gains a false idea of love.

In **Ch VI: The Rebellious “Bad” Boy**, Adler introduces us to the case of twelve-year-old Nicholas, who is incorrigible. He is accused of fighting and stealing while on probation, and the parents have been advised to send him away to an institution. Adler believes that this information shows that the parents have not found a way to persuade the boy to live on the useful side of life. Such children suffer from inferiority and superiority complexes, and believe they must show that no one can help them. For that reason, he suggests, “If you approach such a child with the attitude, 'Perhaps I will not succeed, but another person could,' you soften his antagonism. We must never despair of finding a correct method, nor doubt that another person can do it if we cannot.”

The case report begins: The father died when Nicholas was four years old. The mother remarried and the stepfather is very friendly with Nicholas. He has a sister who is thirteen months older, and they quarrel constantly. The mother says she cannot endure Nicholas any longer and wants him sent away because he is noisy and gets the house dirty. (Adler: From the tone of her remarks about him, we know that the mother's relationship with the boy is not good. Also, he wants to surpass his older sister, but finds her too strong. He expects his mother to promote his interests and when she refuses, he attacks her by being untidy and by fighting. He expresses his discouragement by stealing.) The mother says that before the death of the boy's father, she had no difficulties with him. The difficulties began much later, when she took him back after her second marriage. (Adler: The boy could not make an adjustment after he came back, because he came into a new situation for which he was unprepared, and the reason for his difficulty with his mother is that he believed her responsible for his lessened importance.)

After the father's death, the boy was placed with a foster-mother, who complained that both Nicholas and his sister were bad, and she wanted more money for keeping them. (Adler: Both children began to fight because they were in an uncongenial environment.) Then Nicholas was put into a home with strangers where there were three other children. This family did not give him and his sister enough to eat. Nicholas got into difficulties and mischief with the other children. Then he was placed with a third family, where the children were never allowed to play outside of the house. An older girl took Nicholas's sister out sometimes, but left Nicholas at home. He remained in this home for a year and a half, until the mother remarried. (Adler: The boy has had repeated experiences of humiliation, and he suffered deeply in the first six years

of his life.) When Nicholas first returned to his home, he cried a great deal and sat on his mother's lap most of the time. (Adler: The child wanted his mother and couldn't find her. And now he is with her, his mother wants to send him away again. Nicholas is anxious to win his mother's love and be close to her.)

Nicholas says, "I don't want to go to school any more because the work is too hard for me. I wish I could go back to the parental home; I liked it there." (Adler: These remarks are familiar indications of the beginning of a criminal career. If a person believes his work is too hard, he feels he has to steal to earn a living, and now this boy is making a gesture of bravado, as if he wanted to be a criminal and wanted to go to jail. Such statements are signs of hopeless rage, and we shall have to gain his confidence before we can do much with him.)

He cut off the tails of two cats with his father's cleaver and he let out a carload of chickens, so he could chase them. Once he stole twenty dollars from a woman's apartment. He has taken many small articles from stores. (Adler: All these crimes indicate beyond any doubt that he has no social feeling, either for animals or for human beings, and he will do anything in order to annoy people. His goal is to maintain the center of the stage, and to torture and punish his mother, teacher, and all others who do not favor him.)

One of the teachers took him driving in her car all day, and then to supper with friends of hers, and Nicholas made himself most agreeable and helpful, even helping to set the table for an impromptu supper. (Adler: You see how easily he can be disarmed on occasion. But a method must be found which works continually, and not only from time to time.)

The mother enters.

Adler: We believe that this is not at all a hopeless case. We find that Nicholas is an intelligent boy, and if we can discover the mistakes that have been made in his early education, and correct them, he will turn out very well. It would be good thing to convince him that you love him just as much as you do the older girl. Your son believes his sister has a distinct advantage, and he lacks hope because he feels that he is out of the competition. It is for this reason that he wants to make trouble, and annoys you and your family.

Mother: He behaves so badly that nobody likes him.

Adler: If a friend makes a mistake, we should only smile and call it to his attention gently. We should not be annoyed; we should not scold. It is your problem to make the home more attractive to him, and everybody in the family must try to conciliate him. The teacher and I will also help, but you must be patient for the process will take time. You must never say to him, "You will come to a bad end." You see, he has lost his courage and only wants to have an easy life. It will be your duty to encourage him to face life more bravely.

The boy enters.

Adler: How do you do! Suppose you sit down among these friends and tell us what you like to do most.

Nicholas: I want to go to West Point and ride a horse and carry a gun.

Adler: Couldn't you do that on a ranch or on a farm?

Nicholas: No, they have fat horses on a farm.

Adler: Do you like quick horses, race horses? Are you having a race with your sister, to see who is going to come out ahead?

Nicholas: Yes.

Adler: I believe you are not brave enough. She is a good pupil in school. But it seems to me that you have lost hope of being a good pupil. I believe that you are a clever boy and could be one of the best pupils in your class, if you tried. It takes some time, but it is bound to happen. You cannot go to West Point right away, and it requires a great deal of study to be allowed to enter. The best way to get to West Point is to do your present school tasks courageously.

Perhaps you believe your mother does not love you enough and that your sister does not care for you either. I know that your mother does love you, and I am going to send word to your sister, telling her not to fight with you all the time. If you would help your mother a little more, your mother and sister would certainly like you better. Now I suggest that in

the next week you do things that other people do not like, only two times, and then come back and see me again. Do you think you can succeed?

Nicholas: Yes.

In **Chapter VII: The Hunger Strike**, Adler tells us that our focus will be on six-year-old Betty, whose main problem is difficulty in eating. Although her difficulty is marked in proportion to her attitude to her surroundings, Adler points out that we must be careful to first exclude organic diseases. “Anyone who works with children needs some medical experience, and lay psychologists and social workers should be very careful lest they make dangerous mistakes in their diagnoses.” Nonetheless, in Betty's case, because her eating difficulties vary with her environment, he suspects the problem is psychological rather than medical.

According to the case notes: Her condition is particularly unfavorable with her mother. Rarely is the child eager for food and almost always she dawdles over her meals. When she eats, she keeps a few bites of food in her cheek and appears agonized at the necessity of swallowing. (Adler: This is almost unmistakable evidence that Betty wishes to intensify her dependency on her mother's care. Perhaps her mother spoiled Betty in the beginning, and then realized that she had followed the wrong course and gave it up. As the mother probably overemphasized the importance of eating, Betty is attacking her weakest point.) The worse meal is breakfast, at which Betty can hardly be forced to eat anything. (Adler: I am not sure whether I am correct in my explanation, but this appears to me like a child's morning song, as if Betty was giving her mother a hint of the difficulties she might expect during the day.)

For a long time, she resorted to vomiting and had a number of food fads. If she was forced to eat she would vomit. (Adler: It would be easy enough to stop Betty's food fads and vomiting, but at a later time she would develop other symptoms.) There is a secondary problem, in that in the last two years she has evinced a growing unsocial attitude and increasing belligerence toward others, including her mother. She refuses to greet people. (Adler: Many children, whose goal is to dominate the grown-up environment, have difficulty in greeting their teachers or people on the street, because they feel that such a salutation is evidence of submission.) Betty does not speak freely or civilly to people she meets

and often uses abusive language. She shuns new situations and meeting new people, old or young. (Adler: This is further evidence that the child's social interest has not developed.)

The immediate family consists of mother, father, and the one child. There is a considerable nervous tension due to economic stress and a long siege of illness in the mother's own family. Both parents are high-strung, and outbursts of nerves have occurred from time to time. (Adler: Betty has been precluded by her lack of social interest from making contacts with people outside, and the nervous strain has closed the way for her within the family. The sole remaining sphere to express her superiority has been in the maintenance of her food fads.) She is given to thumb-sucking. It was a tremendous task to break her of this habit. When her hands were bound, she resorted to vomiting. (Adler: She has always been in violent revolt against prohibitions. Children who want to dominate resent prohibitions. They cannot be influenced by punishment.) Her teacher says she does everything well when she tries. (Adler: Any reproof would be an insult to her pride and ambition.)

She feels the absence of a sister or brother and complains that she has no one to play with at home. There is a constant and intense protest about the mother's work and absence from home. (Adler: It is doubtful whether she really wants a brother or sister. Her complaints are to be considered rather as an accusation against her mother. She really wants her mother to be at home, occupied solely with her.) For a long time, she demanded to be told stories about bad animals and bad people. The good stories do not interest her. (Adler: Individuals who have no social interest like to believe that people are naturally bad. Most egoistic philosophers have sponsored such theories. Socially interested individuals are usually tolerant and kind and try to understand the factors which make people bad.)

The mother comes in.

The following is an excerpt from Adler's recommendations to her: We have carefully considered the story of your little girl and find that she is a very intelligent and promising child. I think that your understanding of her conduct has been excellent in many respects. It seems to me that the child felt that she was deserted when you were busy with your family and has not forgiven you for it. She does not realize that her life's purpose now is to punish you for this desertion, but I believe that if you

speak with her about it, you can convince her of your friendship. You must also explain to her that she has always tried to dominate the family and point out that neither you nor your husband try to dominate; that the family is a partnership, one for all, and all for one.

Chapter VIII: Follow the Leader is about twelve-year-old Michael who has been caught in a number of robberies. He belongs to a gang led by a fourteen-year-old boy, who teaches the younger boys how to steal. Adler's first impression: Michael must be seriously dissatisfied with his environment. If the leader of the gang influences him to steal, it is evident that he has more significance among these boys than in school or at home.

The case notes begin: He has been stealing for some time, until Baldy, the leader, was sent away to a home about two years ago. Now Baldy is back and the boys have been caught in several robberies. (Adler: An important factor is that Michael does not steal independently. It is probable that he is extremely dependent on others. He wants to be an underling, and acquires a distorted sense of superiority in blindly following his leader's commands.) The father and mother were born in Ukrania and the mother speaks very little English. There are three children, Leon, age 14; Michael, age 12; and Mary, age 6. They live in a four-room flat of the old tenement type. There are no elevators, no bath, no heat, and the toilet is in the hall. (Adler: It is probable that Michael's older brother has developed the characteristics of a leader, and that Michael has submitted to him in order to feel his equal. By allowing himself to be led, he gains the leader's attention and appreciation. The description of the home shows that they are very poor, and the family situation may be bad.)

Michael seems affectionate and friendly with everyone, including his own family. At school he is popular and gets on well with the other children. (Adler: The history confirms our assumptions about this child's psychology. He is friendly and submissive and therefore unlikely to be the leader in any misdemeanor.) The father says, "The older brother eagerly tells how he beat up another boy in his brother's defense, but he feels very much superior to Michael. He is farther along in school and gets better marks. He does not steal or play dice." (Adler: The older brother fights with Michael and suppresses him in order to overcome his own innate feeling of inferiority, while Michael worships his brother as a hero.)

The teacher says, "I like Michael and the children like him. He has an intelligence quotient of 70. An emotional test indicated that he is much concerned over the robberies and with being taken to the Children's Court. He appears to be afraid of the older boys in the gang." (Adler: The low I.Q. would lead many people to believe that this child was retarded, but it must be remembered that his life pattern is one of discouragement and fear.)

His earliest recollection is: I remember when we lived in Little Falls, we used to steal watermelons. (Adler: It is interesting that he does not say, "I used to steal." Michael is never solitary. I doubt if he understands that it is wrong to steal. He is more or less hypnotized by the gang spirit, for in the gang he loses his personal identity and responsibility.)

To the question, "What would you like to be when you grow up?" he instantly replied, "Police commissioner." (Adler: Michael wants to be a police commissioner because his ideal symbolizes the commander, the strongest man. It is a compensation for his own weakness.)

Adler's summary comments: Michael must understand why he insists on playing an inferior role. He should be encouraged to believe that he is capable of being his own leader. In talking to Michael, it will be better not to speak of the robberies. We need concern ourselves only with his undervaluation of himself. We must also find out whether he is really left-handed, and whether he needs special training in reading and spelling.

The boy comes in.

Adler: Why, you are a great, strong boy! I thought you were little and weak, and it's not so at all. You are an intelligent boy and do not need a leader. You are big enough to be independent and courageous and be a leader yourself. Do you think you must always be a slave to other boys and do what they command? How long would it take you to stop doing everything they tell you? Do you think you can do it in four days?

Michael: Maybe.

Adler: Eight days?

Michael: Yes, I can do it in eight days.

Michael leaves.

Adler (to the students): We have no rules, but our task in this case is obviously to bring Michael to the useful side of life by changing his pattern to a more courageous one.

Student: How can you make him feel that it is worthwhile to be courageous?

Adler: Courage cannot be given like a spoonful of medicine. We must show him that he will be happier if he does not undervalue himself, and he will discover the advantages of courage as soon as we can get him to resist the commands of his gang. If we add to his self-esteem, courage will come of itself. So long as he feels inferior, he will not accept responsibility. The training to be responsible and the training to be courageous are all part of the same thing.

In **Chapter IX: The Too-Docile Child**, Adler reviews the situation of eight-year-old Saul, who does not get along well at school. The case notes state: Saul seems quite indifferent to his standing in school and says he does not know how to do his work. After considerable pressure on the child in private conference, it was found that he did possess some knowledge, although it was difficult to determine the extent of his understanding, because he made no effort at all to produce any facts from his memory. (Adler: If a child has given up hope, and believes progress is impossible, his attitude is best expressed by a lack of memory and an ignorance of facts.)

His conduct was very poor and interfered with school work. He would leave his seat and wander around, attack other children for real or fancied slights, talk aloud and especially attempt to be funny and make children laugh by gestures, ways of walking, and joking. He seemed to have a certain amount of dramatic power and would have been funny had he done the same things at the right time. But there is no place in school for this kind of action. (Adler: Saul plays the role of a clown in order to be the center of attention. He uses the cheap means at his disposal because he does not trust himself to gain the limelight of the classroom in a useful way.) He cries easily and seems rather babyish when reproved. This conduct alternates with his attempts to be funny. (Adler:

A spoiled child very often likes to play the role of a baby. He uses two means to gain attention –either he is a comedian or a baby.)

He had no trouble in the kindergarten where no scholastic results were required of him, but as soon as he entered the first grade, at the age of six, the trouble began and has increased with each grade. (Adler: If we review our knowledge to this point, we must conclude that he is a spoiled child who has made progressive resistance to the problems of growing up. The nearer he approaches these problems the harder he protests, trying to evade the issues and escape to the useless side of life.)

The parents are living. Saul has a sister, five years old. (Adler: I imagine, if we investigate thoroughly, we shall find that the trouble began when he was three or four years old and was forced to face the rivalry of his sister. It is probable that he began losing his courage and self-confidence at this time and began to insist by his actions that he wanted his mother's overindulgence to continue.) The little sister is very attractive, and though not spoiled, the whole family indulges her. Saul is very fond of her. (Adler: This would seem to upset our interpretation, were it not for the fact that Saul probably recognizes that he has been conquered by the enemy, and as he has lost hope of winning the battle, he makes friends with his conqueror. It is not unusual for dethroned children to express fondness for those who have displaced them.)

The boys he plays with call him “Fat” because he is very fat; they also call him a “dope” because of his school difficulties. (Adler: The most common reason for excess fat is over-eating. But, he may have some glandular illness which causes obesity.)

He goes to the movies and they fill a great deal of his thoughts. (Adler: I ought to say a word here about the movies. Most movies depend for their appeal on tricks, and that is what children and adults want to learn: a quick way to power. Tricks, slyness, and cunning should be recognized as the devices of a coward. We may laugh at them and be astonished by their efficacy, but in our deeper conscience we ought to know that they are used only by people who do not trust their own powers toward a normal goal.) It is his ambition to be a movie actor. He is deeply interested in them all, and his hero is Tom Mix. (Adler: This ambition is not surprising in view of the fact that he has been playing a role all during his school life. The role of a clown, a comedian, an actor interested in tricks. He wants to overcome dangers, to be powerful, and

probably he believes that being a moving picture actor is a way to attain his ends.)

In the conference with the mother, she insists that Saul eats normally, and does not eat too many sweets.

Saul enters the room smiling and full of confidence.

Adler (shaking hands with the boy): Hello, how are you? Won't you sit down here and talk to me? I have some interesting things to tell you. I know that you really can be a good pupil and soon all the old troubles will be gone. You will be more attentive and will understand the teacher better. Then you will get ahead and be well liked in school.

Saul: (impressed) Yes.

Adler: Is your sister a very sweet girl? (Saul nods in assent.) Girls usually develop more quickly than boys when they are young, but you must not believe she is any brighter than you are. In a short while, you will be able to keep in advance of her. You will always be the older one and will always protect her.

Saul: Yes, sir.

Adler: They have told me that you were worried because the boys in the street called you "Fat." When I was your age, the boys also used to call me "Fat," but it did not bother me, because I studied hard in school and I told the boys that even when they called me nicknames I got good school reports. What do you want to be when you grow up?

Saul: I want to be an actor.

Adler: Then you must learn to read and write, and speak carefully. Even the movie actors must know how to speak well now. I think it would be better for you to study hard than to disturb your class by playing the clown. Wait until you are grown up and are a movie actor, before you try to make other people laugh. Your job now is to pay attention to the teacher and make friends for yourself. (as the boy is leaving) You are a very fine boy.

Saul (turning at the door and bowing several times): Thank you.

(He leaves.)

Student: What is the significance of this boy having picked for his heroes movie stars who are tall and slender?

Adler: You see how quickly children find their goal. He wants to be tall and slender because he dislikes being fat. If a child is weak, he wants to be strong, if he is poor, he wants to be rich; if he is sick, he wants to be a doctor because he believes doctors are always healthy.

In **Chapter X: Laying the Neurotic Foundation**, Adler begins by telling us that the conduct of this patient is considered to be a riddle. The case report begins: Rachel is a twelve-year-old girl, whose present problem is truancy. She refuses to go to school, on the grounds that she cannot work in the classroom. (Adler: The opening words of this case history fairly accurately describe a child with an inferiority complex. If Rachel plays truant, we may be certain that there are adults in the environment who are attempting to enforce her attendance. The child is saying “No” to these adults, and in this way attains a subjective feeling of superiority in her home.) Rachel has always been a problem child. Her present problem is an extension of her attitude in the class. (Adler: “Always” is a very strong word to use, and it is hard to believe that she was a problem from the first days of her life. It is more likely that something happened against which she rebelled. Perhaps this unhappy event was the birth of a younger brother or sister.

When Rachel was promoted to a junior high school, she insisted that she must return to the elementary school from which she had been promoted. She was not permitted to do this, because she was expected to meet her problem in her new surroundings. She then said she would attend school, if she were permitted to be in a lower class in the junior high school. (Adler: The real reason Rachel wants to get out of her class and worry her entire environment is lack of courage to face the new situation. She is boasting of her inability, and the more she insists that she is incapable of doing the work, the more the teachers and parents insist on the contrary. This is one way of turning an inferiority complex into a superiority complex.)

She was put in a class similar to the one which she had just left in the elementary school, but she did not keep her promise. Then her father beat her, but she still refused to attend. Finally, Rachel was taken to the

children's clinic at one of the hospitals. At this clinic, permission was granted her to stay at home for a time. (Adler: She was able to make the clinic fall into her trap. It is not sufficient to allow Rachel to stay at home, for she is still the same child, with the same pattern of life.)

Rachel has said that if she had been permitted to be in the same class with her friend, she would have attended, but this request was refused. Although her pose is sometimes that of timidity, she has shown anything but a meek disposition in the course of her refusals at school. She has been very rude and disrespectful on several occasions. (Adler: this interesting evidence confirms my feeling that she belongs to a domineering type, and is not at all averse to fighting others. Her only fear is to meet a new situation alone.)

As a little girl, there was no fault to find with her conduct, but a year and a half ago, a teacher criticized her work in school. (Adler: Evidently Rachel is striving for an ideal, fictitious goal of superiority. She would like to play God. In order to fill this role, she must be faultless and domineering, and when she can no longer play that part, she refuses to play at all.) Recently, Rachel revealed that she had harbored resentment against this teacher for six months, before she showed it. (Adler: These six months are highly significant, because they were the time of preparation for her neurotic behavior. A neurosis does not appear overnight. It must be nurtured before it can bloom.)

The parents are living. The family consists of an older sister, 19; a brother, 17; Rachel, 12; a younger sister, 7; and a younger brother, 5. (Adler: Rachel suffered the typical dethronement of the child used to a central position in her family, on the arrival of a little sister.) The older brother has a habit of biting his nails, and when Rachel sees him do this she becomes quite upset and screams. The brother realizes Rachel's nervous state, but does not stop biting his nails. The mother is helpless in the entire situation. (Adler: More evidence confirming the idea of Rachel's pattern. She dominates the entire family; when she is crossed, she screams.)

Rachel does not play games, but attends the movies. (Adler: The movies require no social feeling, and enable her to gain an easy sense of significance by identification with the heroines. The competition in games requires self-reliance and hard work.) The other children realize her condition, and give in to her. The teacher reported that she exhibited

fear when she could not do the work. Once, when she was afraid, she cried and held her hands to her mouth, while they twitched nervously. She was mothered and kept at the teacher's desk, and the rest of the class was warned not to disturb her. (Adler: Fear is her strongest weapon. By means of fear she is able to control her environment.)

Her ambition is to be a typist, and her fear is a fear of colored people. (Adler: In America, the fear of colored people is an excellent method of producing anxiety. It is as good as any other reason for not going out on the street.)

Rachel enters.

Adler: Come in and sit down. How are you? Do you like this place? Does it look like a school?

Rachel: Yes.

Adler: Everybody likes you here, and they are all looking at you. Does that please you?

Rachel: Yes.

Adler: I think you are a little too fond of having things your own way, wherever you are. You make the excuse that you are afraid of colored people to keep from going on the street. No one can keep the attention of the whole world all the time, but if you are friendly and helpful, everybody will like you. I know that the teacher told you that you were stupid, but that is not so. I am sure that you are a very intelligent girl. The teachers used to tell me that I was very stupid, but I laughed about it. Anybody can do school work, and we all know that you can do yours. But if you stay at home because of your fear of colored people, I shall begin to think you are not so intelligent after all. Would you like to be a good pupil?

Rachel: Yes.

Adler: I think you could do it in a week if you tried. Will you write me a letter and let me know how you are getting along?

Rachel leaves.

The following is a letter which Adler received a week later.

My Dear Dr. Adler:

This week was entirely a different week. I was outside all the time. I think that my visit to you did me good. Miss X thinks that if you would advise me to do some teaching to small children in Miss X's school that would be a good idea. P.S. I was called in to write this letter. This is the first letter I ever typewrote.

Yours truly,
Rachel

Chapter XI: Congenital Retardation is about Sidney, a ten-year-old boy who is unable to read and write. He has a very poor memory, and there is a question whether he is retarded or not. (Adler: The mere inability to read or write is not a sign of retardation. The child may have been badly prepared for school lessons. It is true that most retarded children cannot read or write, but if Sidney regards reading as an overpowering task from which he wants to escape he may be considered an intelligent child. A retarded child would be more likely to stay in school and make no effort to get out of the difficulty.)

Sidney has poor muscular development and bad neuro-muscular coordination, and he is unable to dress and undress himself without assistance. (Adler: Here again we must determine whether or not his intelligence is inadequate or whether he wants constant support.) He could not speak until he was five years old. (Adler: It is difficult to decide whether a child who cannot speak until he is five years old is retarded, or merely badly spoiled.) He has always wet the bed at night, and still does. He urinates too frequently, especially when is in a state of nervousness. (Adler: Bed-wetting is common among coddled children, especially if there is a younger brother or sister. He may also urinate frequently during the day to gain attention.)

There are no early recollections. He dreams sometimes of his grandfather, who died two years ago. (Adler: He may have been badly shocked by his grandfather's death. Perhaps he is afraid of death. If it suits a child to be afraid, he dreams of fearful things and trains himself to find the very pictures which cause him to be afraid. This means that someone must always be on hand to protect him. We begin to have some semblance of a pattern of life appearing in this history.) He asks many

questions about everything. (Adler: It is probably that he asks stupid questions in order to keep someone occupied with him.)

Until recently, he could not sleep more than four or six hours at a time. For the last few months, he has been taking chiropractic treatments and now sleeps nine hours without waking. (Adler: If he really does not like to sleep, it may be considered further evidence that he is spoiled. The pampered child does not like to sleep because he hates to lose connection with his grownup environment.) He can tell the time, but cannot tell the days. (Adler: This case history is rather inadequate. In the first place, we must know more about his first year and why he became so timid. We want to find out why he was so influenced by his grandfather's death. It is also very important to understand the mother's relationship with the child.)

Adler interviews the parents and the child. As he questions Sidney, he examines the boy's head. After Sidney leaves, Adler offers his conclusions: While I have been asking these questions, I have been making a physical examination of this child and find several stigmata of degeneration. There can be no question as to the defect in his intelligence. If this boy had a real style of life, he would be afraid, but both the manner of his entering the room and his father's account of his activities show that he is not timid. Retarded children can often be distinguished from maladjusted children by their lack of fear. This child is not intelligent enough to know that he is in danger. There can hardly be a doubt that he is retarded. I know that your board of education provides a school for such retarded children, and the father should be advised by the teacher who brought in the case to enter his child in one of these classes.

Chapter XII: The Tyranny of Illness focuses on the case of five-year-old Milton whose present problem is disobedience, cruelty, over-activity, and that he “cannot catch his breath.” (Adler: These character traits are aimed at someone. It may be safe to assume that Milton's mother is a solicitous and orderly woman who demands a certain amount of cooperation from the child. Milton, on the other hand, is evidently not inclined to yield to her, perhaps because he believes that she has been unjust or harsh to him. The difficulty in breathing is a protest of much the same sort as cruelty and over-activity. When the boy is over-active, he protests with his muscles, and when he cannot catch his breath, he

protests with his lungs. We must learn to understand this slang which our various organs speak.)

Milton is the youngest of three children. There are two older sisters, ages twelve and nine. The two older girls seem well adjusted. (Adler: Perhaps the mother has praised the older children for their orderliness, and Milton has lost hope of ever competing with them. It is very probable that he used to be spoiled. If he had a good deal of sickness, he may have learned that while he was sick, he was pleasantly overindulged and has adopted the mechanism of an artificial illness, in order to assure himself of his mother's attention.) He sleeps either with his father or his mother, more frequently with the mother. (Adler: A boy of five ought to be sleeping alone. If he still prefers to sleep with his mother, it is a good indication that he is too much attached to her. Presumably, the goal of Milton's life is to be watched and favored by his mother. The conflict in this family lies in the fact that the mother apparently wishes her son to be socially adjusted, healthy and orderly, while the boy is doing his best to remain a baby.)

During his early childhood, he suffered from bronchitis, pneumonia, pleurisy, tonsillitis, and rickets. (Adler: During his illness, Milton's every breath was the object of attention and solicitude. Now when he finds himself in an unfavorable situation in competing with older and better-adjusted sisters, he threatens his mother with his lungs, so to speak.)

Milton is much attached to his mother, but there is considerable conflict with the older sisters, whom he teases. He is cruel to his sisters and to other children. (Adler: The older girls probably antagonize Milton, and he teases in retaliation. The case history tells us that he is cruel. In psychological language, this means that he is discouraged. Very often children with an abnormal tendency to cruelty wreak their power on weak or unsuspecting children and animals, in order to console themselves for their diminished sense of importance.)

Milton spends afternoons in the kindergarten where he seems to adjust fairly well. He complains that he has no one to play with. Both the father and the mother occasionally beat him because he refuses to obey them. He is constantly surrounded by a wall of "don't do this" and "don't do that." After he is stopped, he usually has an attack of breathlessness. (Adler: Herein lies the crux of the entire situation. The parents, especially the mother, are so anxious for the child's welfare that they do

not allow him to play in the street like other boys. If he cannot have boys of his own age to play with, he occupies his mother with his mischief. When she frustrates him in this, he attacks her with his breathlessness. Although this is not a conscious process, he unconsciously realizes what he gains by these spasms.)

Milton's ambition is to be a doctor. (Adler: A boy who has been as sick as Milton would inevitably value the role of a doctor very highly.) He does not wash or dress himself, but he can find his way on the streets or run errands. He can recognize his own house. (Adler: Being able to recognize his own house is an excellent test of normal mentality. The boy does not wash and dress himself, because this keeps his mother working for him.)

Adler's concluding remarks: Our course must be apparent to all who understand the underlying theories of individual psychology. We must influence this mother to make Milton more independent. She must not criticize him so much and she must hide her fears for his future. We have noted that the boy's behavior is always better away from home, and we must explain to the mother that he will improve in a more social environment. She should not be censured, but encouraged to adopt a new viewpoint.