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CHAPTER 8

Career-Style Counseling

MARK L. SAVICKAS

Adler's Individual Psychology offers a perspective on vocational development that enriches the classic career-counseling model. The present chapter contains an elaboration of this assertion and a presentation of methods and materials that career counselors can use to bring the Adlerian perspective to their work. The chapter begins with a review of the strengths and weaknesses of the most widely used approach to career counseling: matching persons to occupations. What follows is a discussion of four ways in which Adler's Individual Psychology elaborates this matching model to be more useful to counselors. The remaining two thirds of the chapter contain a presentation of Individual Psychology materials and methods specifically designed for Adlerian career counseling or, more precisely, career-style counseling. The presentation of career-style counseling is divided into three sections. The first section consists of a description of a structured interview that counselors use to collect data about a client's career style; the second section holds ideas on how counselors think about these data to assess the client's career style; and the third section contains a description of a model for career-style counseling.

The Matching Model

The classic model for career counseling (Parsons, 1909) is based on the psychology of individual differences. Counselors use individual differences to match people with suitable and viable occupations. The fundamental proposition of the matching model follows the wisdom of the familiar maxim,

"birds of a feather flock together." Counselors measure clients' interests and then identify corresponding occupations in which their interests may be enacted and rewarded. These congruent occupations offer clients opportunities to integrate personal needs with job demands and thereby experience occupational success, work satisfaction, and job stability.

Career counseling that follows the matching model can be likened to a translation service. A linguist translates Spanish into English; a career counselor translates a client's personality into occupational titles. For example, if clients seem nurturing and dominant, then the counselor may translate their self-concepts into occupational titles such as teacher, counselor, minister, nurse, or other occupations in which the worker offers guidance to individuals and groups. The counselor then encourages clients to explore these occupations.

The matching model is embedded in the major career-counseling *interest inventories*. These inventories automate the translation task. In responding to interest inventory items, clients describe themselves in terms of the constructs provided by the inventory's author. The scoring keys for the inventory comprise theoretically or empirically derived descriptions of successful workers in a variety of occupations or work environments. The results profile a client's similarity to workers in different occupations. In effect, results plotted on the profile sheet translate the client's self-concept into occupational titles. Test interpretation is the prime counseling method that counselors use with the matching model and materials. Counselors interpret interest inventory results to clients in ways designed to encourage vocational planning, guide occupational exploration, and facilitate career decision making.

The matching model with its inventory materials and interpretation methods is very popular with both clients and counselors. In fact, many clients begin their initial interview by requesting an interest inventory because they have heard from others that inventories are useful. Counselors like interest inventories because they provide occupational titles to discuss with clients. Few counselors deny that interest inventories can be used effectively with clients who are ready to translate their self-concepts into occupational titles.

Readiness, however, is essential if the use of inventories is to be effective. A great many clients have not crystallized their self-concepts and so they are not ready to respond meaningfully to interest inventories, especially those that present occupational titles as items. When asked to respond, they do their best, yet their indecision and confusion in dealing with inventory items produces inconsistent, undifferentiated, and unstable profiles. Every career counselor has experienced frustration while interpreting flat or inconsistent profiles to disappointed clients.

Most counselors soon learn that interest inventory interpretation does not help clients who lack a clear and stable picture of who they are and what they want in life. These clients benefit from help that develops their self-concepts and clarifies their career goals. Career counselors need materials and methods that ease clients' identity development and goal selection. Such techniques make clients consider their own experiences and opinions instead of just reacting to interest inventory items.

Adler's Individual Psychology (IP) broadens the classic matching model as well as its methods and materials to accommodate the needs of these clients. IP elaborates the core constructs of the matching model. It also offers methods and materials that widen the range of clients that the model addresses. *IP's attention to life goals and career styles can help clients develop their identities.* This self-knowledge prepares them to make occupational translations that capture their spirit, not just their stereotypes of the world of work.

Adlerian Enhancement of the Matching Model

IP counselors appreciate matching for fit, yet view it as static. Therefore, they expand the classic matching model, beyond predicting occupational fit based on individual differences in traits such as interests and abilities, to include how people use the traits they possess. IP counselors agree with Uncle Remus, who said to Br'er Rabbit, "*it ain't what you got, it's how you use it.*"

Similar to trait-and-factor counselors who apply the classic matching model, IP counselors inventory clients' abilities, interests, and values. However, they concentrate on how their clients *use* these traits to fit in; that is, to *belong*, *contribute*, and *cooperate*. Adler's psychology of use can elaborate the classic matching model in at least four ways because it:

1. expands the core construct of fit,
2. concentrates on uniqueness,
3. explains how interests develop, and
4. thus clarifies the meaning of career decisions.

Elaboration 1: From Fit to Belongingness

Individual Psychology elaborates counselors' conceptions of occupational fit and enhances their ability to communicate it to clients. In describing the classic matching model, vocational theorists present occupational fit as the core construct for psychological and pragmatic reasons (Holland, 1997). Empirical evidence shows that goodness of fit between a person and occupational position relates to job satisfaction and success. IP theorists

agree and add social and philosophical reasons to support person-position fit as the criterion for career choice.

The IP elaboration of the fit construct rests on ideas about belongingness and social interest. Each individual is born into the stream of history. When a baby arrives, the community already exists. The toddler's experience can be likened to someone being pushed to center stage as the curtain rises for Act II. Without knowing what occurred in Act I, the actor must try to fit into the ongoing story and relate to the characters who share the stage. The successful actor moves toward the other characters, learns to cooperate with them, and thus carves out a role. In life, the child should move toward the family and community. They in turn must welcome the child in order for the child to feel *belongingness.*

When the child feels belongingness, the child can form attachments and develop social interest. The child then responds to *social expectations* (also called developmental tasks) to become somebody in relation to other people. To thrive, children must make a place for themselves in the community through work, friends, and love. *Thus, fit leads not just to earning personal payoffs, like success and satisfaction, but also to making social contributions.* People must ask both selfish and selfless questions in trying to fit in: Where can I make my place? How can I contribute? To answer these questions, people should consider their unique goals and talents.

Elaboration 2: From Similarity to Uniqueness

In the classic matching model, interest inventories deal with how the client is similar to workers in different occupations. The Adlerian perspective addresses these similarities yet also deals with individuality. IP emphasizes the uniqueness of a *life in progress* because Adlerian counselors believe that people design their own personalities. A person is both the artist and the painting. People shape and channel their movement through an ever-widening social context by structuring personal goals and means. To understand clients, IP advises that counselors learn *what clients intend* and *how they propose to do it.* Clients' *goals and means* reveal their uniqueness, whereas interest inventories profile their resemblance to other people. Inventories measure how clients feel about occupations, not how they intend to use them to achieve their goals and become more effective and complete.

Elaboration 3: From Inventorying Interests to Creating Interest

Once a counselor understands a client's life goals, the counselor knows the client's orientation to life and the general direction in which the client heads. Adlerians call the client's way of moving to a goal *guiding lines* (Griffith & Powers, 1984). Knowing a client's goal and guiding lines allows the counselor to envision the client's career path. Think of a real path that

you can walk along in your own neighborhood. What you meet along the path can attract or repel you. You have to react to what you encounter even if the reaction is disinterest or boredom. Objects on a different path require no reaction, assuming that you even know they exist. By analogy, *only occupations along our guiding lines can become interesting to us.* We recognize these occupations and, if we evaluate them as potentially useful, may become interested in them.

Life goals preoccupy us. They shape our outlook; that is, how we approach a subject. From this subjective starting point, we look out for environmental opportunities to objectify our life goals. When we see them, we subjectively link ourselves to these objects by forming an interest. To paraphrase Angyl (1941, p. 55), an interest is not what defines the direction, but on the contrary, the direction defines what can become an interest. As the American novelist John Dos Passos (1959) wrote, "People do not choose careers, they are engulfed by them." Thus, counselors help clients to articulate interests that may be useful to them.

This view of the origin and development of interests fits best for careers in the professions. *Blue-collar workers often do not have an opportunity to select work based on their interests.* They may have to select from job alternatives narrowed by the opportunity structure in their community. Often they must settle for the job they can get or choose the job that pays the most. These workers express their interests through leisure activities and family roles rather than through work.

Elaboration 4: From Matchmaking to Meaning-Making

The classic matching model and its interest inventories focus on occupational choice, not the career decision-making process. *Adlerian counselors distinguish between occupations that clients choose and how they make their choices.* This expands the focus of vocational counseling to include the career decision-making process. From the perspective of IP, the career decision-making process denotes clients' search for a synthesis between their dreams and reality; that is, an integrative solution to the problems of growing up. Counselors evaluate the success of clients' attempts at synthesis by comparing their private sense (dreams) to common sense (reality).

Adlerians refer to *private sense* as the private logic that clients use to orient themselves to life and answer questions such as (1) Who am I?, (2) What is this world like?, and (3) How and where do I fit in? In contrast, Adlerians refer to *common sense* as answers to these questions that make a contribution to the community. The degree of congruence between a client's private logic and the community's common sense indicates the probability that the client will adapt successfully to the challenges of occupational choice and work adjustment.

Clients' private logic includes their "guiding fictions," that is, their conclusions about what they need to feel less incomplete and more secure. Guiding fictions also are called *fictional goals* because they define a client's ideal self-concept and conception of success. In the process of career decision making, clients' use their private logic to evaluate occupations and to select ones along their guiding lines that move them closer to their fictional goals. An occupation that evokes interest initially attracts a person because in some way it deals with that person's guiding fiction. Interests relate inner needs with outer means. Thus, the occupations that interest clients have a personal meaning for them. Typically people have unexamined ideas about how certain occupations will help them reach their fictional goals and become more complete. Knowing clients' guiding fictions enable counselors to understand the *hidden reasons* (Dreikurs, 1973) or meanings behind their career goals and occupational interests.

In discussing their occupational interests with other people, clients talk in commonsense terms about the public meaning of their occupational interests. Rarely do clients spontaneously articulate the guiding fictions that direct their careers or the hidden meaning behind their occupational interests. For example, several of my clients have wanted to become physicians. They all gave the same commonsense explanation of their interest in medicine: they liked people and science. Yet each client invested medicine with a different fictional goal, such as being in control, overcoming clumsiness, playing with winners, being right, or pleasing father. Their hidden reasons for choosing medicine expressed guiding fictions about what it would take for them to move from a felt minus to a perceived plus.

Common sense understands this idea of occupational choice as a means of turning problems into opportunities. We all have heard stories about a person overcoming stuttering to become an orator, a girl overcoming polio to become an Olympic track star, a boy overcoming shyness to become a famous actor, or a woman overcoming her lisp to become an accomplished newscaster. Although these are dramatic examples, they are not rare. IP contends that everyone forms guiding fictions as they grow up and that everyone's private logic distorts reality to some degree. Thus, in facilitating a client's career decision making, *Adlerian counselors always attend to private logic and uncover guiding fictions in general and hidden reasons for occupational interests in particular.*

For example, a girl grew up with the guiding fiction that she could belong only if she could please other people. In most instances, she was able to get along well. However, with regard to career choice, her father and grandfather were displeased when she considered anything other than law. Although she wanted to become a teacher, she felt completely lost and worthless when her father was displeased. She sought career counseling for

the first time during her final year in law school. She asked the counselor to help her understand why she hated law school and to predict how she would fare as a lawyer. The counselor helped her to examine her fictional goal of pleasing other people and her hidden reason for choosing law. She ultimately became a law professor to integratively resolve her problem in growing up.

Adlerian Career Counseling

Because of their concern with belongingness, uniqueness, usefulness, and meaning-making, *Adlerian career counselors typically do not use interest inventory materials or test interpretation methods.* They implement an IP career-counseling model through prototypal Adlerian materials such as the *Family Constellation Interview Guide* (Dreikurs, 1954, 1973); Shulman & Mosak, (1988a) or Clark (2002). IP counselors use these materials to elicit clients' unique experiences and opinions so that they may assess clients' life goals and career styles. Characteristic IP methods for interpreting the assessment to clients and facilitating their decision making (lifestyle management) or reorientation (lifestyle modification) are presented or explained in Chapters 5, 6, and 13 of the present book.

Counselors who try them usually report that IP materials like the *Life Style Inventory* (Shulman & Mosak, 1988a) are extremely useful as they work with clients to facilitate identity development, enhance self-awareness, and translate identities into occupations. However, they also report three disadvantages in using the *Life Style Inventory* and similar materials with career-choice clients. First, the questions lack face validity for career clients. When clients begin career counseling, they do not expect to be asked about their childhood experiences, family relationships, or early recollections. Although communication and rapport engage them, career clients hesitate before discussing these topics. Second, the materials are extensive, taking two and sometimes three sessions to complete. Third, much of the data gathered with the *Life Style Inventory* pertain to career-adjustment counseling; that is, helping clients cope with problems at work. Although enlightening, data about family constellation and early recollections are unnecessary for career-choice counseling. To eliminate these disadvantages, some counselors do more than adapt lifestyle counseling materials and methods to address career choice. They have developed IP materials and methods specifically for career-choice counseling.

Collectively, I refer to these materials and methods for implementing an Adlerian approach to person–position matching as *career-style counseling.* The remainder of the present chapter describes career-style counseling materials and methods, starting with interview materials designed to

elicit career-style data from clients, continuing with assessment methods to interpret career-style data, and concluding with career-style counseling methods.

Career-Style Interview

The *career-style interview* consists of stimulus questions that seem valid to career-counseling clients and elicit from them opinions and experiences relevant to their career choices. They are intended to help clients ask better questions of themselves. The questions elicit the narratives that they are working on to provide meaning for their lives. The stories reveal life goals and career styles that clients think can solve a problem or make them more complete. The stimulus questions are sequenced into a structured career-style interview. The topics flow smoothly and keep clients actively engaged in self-exploration while they describe themselves for the counselor. The stimulus questions deal with (1) role models, (2) magazines/television shows, (3) favorite story, (4) mottos, (5) school subjects, and (6) leisure activities.

Before posing further questions, the counselor asks the client, "How can I be useful to you as you construct your career?" The client's response to this initial question frames the ensuing dialogue. First, it sets the agenda. It states explicitly what the client wishes to accomplish through consulting a career counselor. If it is not something the counselor can do, then there must be a negotiation or a referral. Second, the counselor listens carefully to hear the solution the client already has in mind. Part of the process of counseling is to have clients articulate and narrate that solution so they themselves hear what they want to do next. As the known is spoken, clients hear themselves articulate their own answer to the question they have posed to the counselor. Third, the counselor relates the responses to the six questions to this initial framework. In a sense, the framework alerts counselors to what they must hear as the client speaks and then assist clients to hear their own narratives. And finally, at the end of the session or set of sessions, the counselor restates the initial response and then asks the client, "Have we done this?" This final question ensures that the contract is fulfilled and the client leaves believing that counseling has been successful and satisfactory.

Question 1: Models

The first topic in the career-style interview addresses self-concept. Counselors begin the career-style interview by investigating a client's solutions to their predicament in life as portrayed by role models. To identify a client's role models, the counselor might say, "Whom did you admire when

you were growing up?" If clients do not understand, then the counselor can ask them whom they respected, maybe even enough to imitate. With clients who cannot think of anyone, the counselor may suggest that it does not have to be a famous person or fictional character. This often leads a client to name a relative or family member. After the client has named one model, the counselor asks for two other models. When the client has named three models, the counselor discusses in turn each model starting by asking the client to "Describe this person to me." It sometimes takes prodding, so the counselor may ask the client to "just tell me about the person. What were they like?" The counselor closes the first topic by asking for each model: "How are you like this person and how are you different from this person?"

It is not unusual for a client to name a famous animal as a model. In fact, many counselors have said that they admired the dog Lassie in children's movies because she was always able to help out and save the day. A crisis counselor said he admired the cartoon superhero character Mighty Mouse for much the same reasons. A gentle and kind social worker reported that his hero was Ferdinand the Bull. He went on to explain what that meant to him in relation to his alcoholic father. Two different clients admired Peter Pan. Both clients had trouble accepting adult responsibilities and eventually chose occupations in which their childlike lifestyles were assets.

As clients discuss their models, counselors should *concentrate on what clients admire* about their models more than whom they admire. In attending to whom clients admire, counselors err by relying on stereotypes and what the model means to them personally. I recall a clear example of this mistake. I was doing a public demonstration of counseling with a disadvantaged student who said that he admired a football player. Several counselors in the audience jumped to the conclusion that the young man viewed professional athletics as his way out of the ghetto. In explaining why he admired the athlete, the young man told several stories demonstrating how the athlete was independent, artistic, and manly. This athlete modeled for him the self-confidence, independence, and vision that corresponded to his secret dream of being an architect. The young man chose his model because the athlete showed him that a person can be artistic without being effeminate. The athlete modeled a way for the young man to accept his mother's encouragement to be artistic and reject his father's admonition that, if he did, he would not be a real man.

As clients discuss role models, the counselor should think of what the models imply to form follow-up questions. Effective follow-up questions express inferences, not interpretations, so clients find them thought provoking and occasionally humorous. For example, someone who admires Bat Man and Robin might be asked, "Do you mask your identity?" or seek to

right wrongs without others knowing who did it? Do you prefer having a helper to share the challenges you take on? The client's answers to follow-up questions increase the counselor's understanding of the client's career style.

In talking about their models, clients describe themselves. *A model shares the client's plight yet has found a way out of the predicament.* In responding to questions about models, clients implicitly tell counselors about the problems that they wish to solve above all else. As they describe the personality of their models, they are actually narrating their self-concepts. As architects of the self, they have selected certain blueprints from which to build a self. These traits constitute the means they believe necessary to resolve their predicament. Thus, counselors may identify the problems that structure clients' goals as well as the means that they use to move toward these goals. In other words, *a client's model identifies a central life goal, articulates and labels the client's central concern, and reveals what the client thinks it will take to overcome that problem.*

In a lifestyle interview counselors ask clients to describe what kind of a man was their father and what kind of a woman was their mother. Clients respond by telling what impresses them about their parents' example. From their answers, counselors learn about parents as clients' standards for what it means to be a man or a woman and how to live as such. These archetypes are usually an unexamined part of a client's private logic. In contrast to the unexamined guiding lines that parents provide, people purposefully choose role models to show them how to work out a role and how to reduce their feelings of incompleteness or inferiority.

Experienced career counselors often ask their clients to compare a role model to a guiding line. The differences between the guide and model reveal the link between that client's problems and goals and thus map the client's line of movement from a felt minus to a perceived plus. For example, one client described his father as tough and his mother as tender. He loved them both and felt torn between their contradictory styles of relating to other people and situations. His way of integrating these contradictory poses was to imitate Robin Hood, whom he described as tough yet tender in defeating villains and helping people in need. The client eventually directed a social work agency, a role he enacted in a tough yet tender manner.

Question 2: Magazines

The second topic in the career-style interview addresses preferred environments. Having considered the client's self-concept, attention turns to the types of work environments in which the client might prefer to enact that self-concept. *To explore occupational environments*, counselors start by asking clients which magazines they enjoy reading. As prods, they ask clients if they subscribe to any magazine or read one regularly. Typically, I try to elicit two or three magazine choices before asking clients to describe what

they enjoy reading in each magazine. It is useful to get some detail about the sections that clients like most or what attracts them to the magazine.

We ask about magazines during a career-style interview because magazines vicariously immerse readers in an environment. Favorite magazines tell us about the environments that fit the client's style. As they listen to a client's responses, counselors link them to the client's responses about role models and consider if the magazines represent environmental outlets for interests that the client finds useful. For example, the student who admired the athlete liked *Jazz Musician* and *Architectural Digest.* A client who emulated his favorite movie dog hero's helpfulness enjoyed *People, National Enquirer,* and *Psychology Today.*

Occasionally, a client does not read magazines. In these instances, the counselor may ask clients about favorite television programs. It usually turns out that they watch some television programs regularly. Favorite television programs, similar to favorite magazines, also provide information about preferred environments. Television shows us things and takes us places; the program channels our attention to a particular environment. Watching *This Old House* takes us to a different environment than does watching *Crime Scene Investigation* or *Friends.*

Question 3: Favorite Story

The third topic in the career-style interview addresses life scripts. Accordingly, the third question asks clients to briefly tell their favorite story. *People are attracted to books in which a major character experiences problems similar to their own problems.* It comforts them to learn how another person resolved a similar problem. Clients find encouragement in how the character dealt with the problem and sometimes even imitate that character's coping strategy. In short, the favorite story provides a script or prescription for living that the client finds especially useful. The story can become a beacon that points the way forward. For example, Bronson Alcott once profoundly remarked about *The Pilgrim's Progress,* "The book gave me to myself."

The counselor inquires about a favorite story by asking clients to name their all-time favorite book or movie. After they name the book or movie, the counselor asks the client to tell what the movie or book is about, to briefly relate the story. In the story line, I listen for how the script unites the client's own self-concept and preferred environments into a life plan. In telling the story, clients usually talk about their own possible futures. Typically, clients' favorite stories portray clearly their central life problem and how they think they might be able to deal with it.

Some clients demonstrate this idea more clearly than others. For example, a female premedical student frequently read *Gone With the Wind* because the heroine Scarlett O'Hara fascinated her. At an unexamined

level, she was dealing with how to be a physician without deviating from her female gender guiding line. She found that this book addressed the fear that her needs for achievement and intimacy conflicted. Another client read Hemingway's *Old Man and the Sea* as a parable that addressed his creativity and hypersensitivity. Another individual watched the crime movie *The Godfather* repeatedly because for her it told the story of a man who brings order to a community by providing a value system and explaining rules for living. She went on to a career of writing books and making social commentaries on these topics, not a life of crime.

Question 4: Mottos

The fourth topic in the career-style interview addresses clients' advice to themselves. *A favorite saying or motto is the best advice the client has for herself or himself.* It is a form of autotherapy in which the client repeatedly tells the self what he or she must do to become more complete. Some mottos that clients have used are "that which flows from the heart alone brings others to your own"; "you got a mouth, use it"; "better safe than sorry"; and "if it's going to be, it's up to me." If clients do not have a motto, counselors can ask them to repeat a saying they remember hearing or create a saying. With encouragement, even reluctant clients can formulate something. It might provide a helpful example now, if readers identified their own favorite saying and reflected upon how that saying relates to their life overall and to the challenges they now face.

Question 5: School Subjects

The fifth topic in the career-style interview addresses the clients' talents, skills, and abilities. *Counselors investigate clients' school experience to consider what talents they have developed and how they use their abilities.* I do this by asking clients about their success (grades) and satisfaction (happiness) in different classes, which may be viewed as work environments. Counselors start by inquiring about which subjects clients liked the most. After clients describe their favorite subjects, counselors ask them about disliked subjects. Then, together they review each subject in detail to determine what clients liked about it and what skills each course required. From these answers, counselors can assess clients' abilities, aptitudes, and achievements.

We ask clients to separate teachers from subjects to avoid confusion. Sometimes clients report a particular subject as their favorite, yet this subject does not fit with their career style. On inquiry, it turns out that the client enjoyed the teacher. For example, one artistic and creative client loved ninth-grade Latin. It turned out that he disliked the subject yet admired the teacher. His favorite part of the course occurred when the

teacher digressed from Latin instruction to relate life experiences and personal opinions.

Question 6: Leisure Activities

The sixth topic in the career-style interview addresses developing competence and confidence through leisure activities. In addition to self-expression, leisure presents opportunities for personal development. Through leisure activities clients can work on feelings of incompleteness or inferiority. Leisure can be autotherapeutic because in structured play, people can symbolically cope with activities or objects that they are unable to master in real life. Through leisure activities, people develop skills and strategies that eventually enhance their competence and confidence and enable them to cope with the problems in real life. In this sense, play is rehearsal. Hobbies are halfway between play and work. *So in examining a client's leisure activities, counselors may concentrate on the competencies being developed and confidence being gained.*

We begin to examine clients' leisure activities by asking them what they like to do in their free time and, if they need a prod, what hobbies they enjoy. If they still need prodding, counselors can ask clients what they did last weekend. An example may explicate the self-development function of leisure. A homemaker who was housebound and felt unproductive decided to learn to play tennis. She played every day during one summer. At the beginning of summer she was pale, overweight, and clumsy. By the end of summer she was tan, slim, and a tournament winner; that was what her playmates saw. They did not recognize her increased achievement motivation, competitiveness, and confidence. She had learned that not only could she compete with men, she could beat them at their own game. That fall, she started her own small business and succeeded. Through tennis she had moved from a felt minus to a perceived plus by transforming her feelings of incompleteness and inferiority into feelings of competence and competitiveness.

Sometimes clients say unexpected things. For example, one client loved bowling. I thought that physical competence or competition made the interest useful to her. Surprisingly, she said her favorite part of bowling was keeping score. As she did so, she grew in skills she sought, namely becoming more accurate, responsible, and efficient.

Career-Style Assessment

After completing the initial interview, I analyze the clients' stories to assess their career styles. Adlerian career counseling focuses on stories because it views language as the efficient means for building careers out of complex social interactions. In those relationships, language and stories are

construction tools for making meaning. Clients, as they tell their stories, feel that they become more real. The more stories they tell the more real they become. The more they view their "me," the more they develop their self-concepts. Storytelling crystallizes what clients think of themselves. Many clients laugh and cry while telling their stories because they see their life themes emerge in the space between client and counselor. It is important that counselors help clients understand the implications of what they have said in telling their stories. This means relating the theme to the problems posed in the beginning of the interview. It is also best to use the client's most dramatic metaphors and favorite words (i.e., those they have used repeatedly). At the same time, I expand the language that a client has available to make meaning out of experience. Career counseling may offer clients the logical language of Holland's theory and model of Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social Enterprising, and Conventional (RIASEC) personality types and environments as well as the dramatic language of stories and the symbolic language of poetry. Helping clients to enlarge their vocabulary of self increases their ability to share their experience through the story and to understand and communicate who they are and what they seek.

Before beginning counseling, the counselor must assess the meaning presented in the client's stories, relate this meaning to the initial reason they sought counseling, and prepare to retell the client's stories in a coherent manner that draws a sharp character sketch, extracts the life script, and encourages emerging engagement with the world of work. Experienced counselors can make these preparations as they conduct the career-style interview so that immediately after finishing the sixth question they begin counseling. For example, if they can only meet with a client once, they will spend half the time conducting the interview and half the time counseling with the client. For example, if they have only one hour with a client, they spend 25 minutes conducting the interview and the remaining time engaging in counseling dialogue. If more than one session is possible, then the tasks of interviewing and counseling may be divided.

Typically, I spend the first session conducting the interview, the second session engaging in counseling, and a third and final session in doing follow-up. I try to have a week between the first and second sessions and a month between the second and third sessions. Sometime in the week between the first and second session, I prepare for the session by doing an eight-step assessment routine that digests the client's responses to the career-style interview into a coherent story that addresses the initial request for counseling. In short, I prepare to repeat to the clients their story as we begin the second session. The following practice case serves to illustrate the eight-step routine. Read the following career-style interview

data, and if you wish, before reading further, perform your own assessment of the client's career style, career path, interests, and occupational prospects. Then read about the eight-step routine using this practice case to illustrate it.

Practice Case

The client was a male, 19-year-old college sophomore majoring in biology. In response to the question of how counseling might be useful to him, he replied, "I want to figure out why I am so depressed when I go into the science building." He reported that he had a 4.00 grade point average and that the biology faculty regarded him as their most talented student.

Models:	Abraham Lincoln because he (1) lost political campaigns yet never gave up, (2) got up and gave speeches, and (3) wrote speeches.
	Thomas Edison because he was (1) imaginative, (2) practical, and (3) told other people what to do.
	Walt Disney because he came up with and built imaginative things.
Magazines:	*Time* and *Newsweek* for movie reviews and politics.
	Jazziz for articles about jazz music and musicians.
Television Show	*Star Trek,* space adventure, imagination
Books:	*Winesburg, Ohio*, about a boy who works for a paper and wants to write.
Motto:	The unexamined life is not worth living.
School Subjects:	Liked history of how foreign policy was shaped, and English, especially drama in plays. Disliked science and mathematics.
Leisure Activities:	Play trumpet, build models

The following eight steps in summary form provide an Adlerian approach to career-style assessment. *First*, counselors may begin to make sense of the client's stories by reviewing how she or he wants to use the counseling experience. These goals frame the subsequent analysis of the stories and the counseling to follow. The frame provides a listening filter with which to hear the stories. For example, in response to the introductory question of "How can I be useful to you in constructing your career?" one client said that she did not know why she could not choose a major and she would like help in making a choice. This gave me two points of reference. She wanted me to help her understand why she could not choose as well as to move her closer to making a choice. So in reviewing her career stories, I listened to her past experiences with and views of making decisions. I was particularly interested in how decision making related to her

life themes, one of which was struggling to become free from domination by her mother's goals for her life. Note that she was not asking, at least initially, for help in identifying a choice. First, she wanted to know what was holding her back. In the practice case, the client stated that he wanted to figure out why he became depressed when he entered the science building. He was doing excellent work yet he was unhappy, an example of how satisfaction may not always follow success.

Second, counselors may review the client's responses to the role model question. As the architects of their own character, individuals select role models as blueprints. Models are selected because they have solved the problems the clients now face. Clients incorporated these key figures as ego ideals, imitated some of their salient behaviors, and now identify with them. How clients describe their role models reveals core elements in their own self-concepts and articulates their psychosocial identities. As I review the descriptions, I circle repeated phrases because they indicate the core self-concept. I then formulate a brief and sharply drawn characterization of the client's self-concept and personality traits. In later stories I look for how these qualities are used and reaffirmed.

In the practice case, the client's first model was Lincoln. I immediately wondered how someone modeling himself after Lincoln became a major in biology. Taken together, the three models show an enterprising and artistic personality, one that may not enjoy sitting in biology lectures. In describing Lincoln, his first and most important comment was that Lincoln never gave up. This probably is a core trait of his self-concept. He sees himself as someone who faces adversity without quitting. Considering the repeated words in his descriptions of his three models, it seems that he has designed himself as someone who might write political speeches that are imaginative. I already began to think that the client was depressed in the science building because he did not fit the other inhabitants' requirements nor value the same rewards. Also, one may wonder if the reason that he did not switch majors may have something to do with not giving up.

Third, counselors may consider responses to the magazine/television show question to determine the client's preferred environments. The counselor benefits from using a structure to conceptualize environments. It is easy to apply Holland's RIASEC typology of work environments to magazines and television shows. For example, *People* magazine is a social type whereas *Car and Driver* is a realistic type. Using the RIASEC system makes it easier to look for matching occupational titles in the *Dictionary of Holland Occupational Codes* (Gottfredson & Holland, 1999). A good alternative system is to analyze the magazines or television shows for the prominence of data, people, things, and ideas. In the practice case, the client preferred environments that are political and imaginative.

He likes reading about politics and movie reviews as well as watching *Star Trek*. It seems as though there is a good fit between his self-concept and the environments he prefers. However, again we do not find interest in scientific or investigative environments. So both his self-concept and environmental preferences are out of step with his life as a biology major in the science building.

Fourth, counselors may look to the client's life script in their narration of their favorite story from a book or movie. Stories are narrative resources that society provide to help individuals make sense and purpose for their lives. A client's synopsis of a favorite story brings together in a unified storyline the self portrayed in role models and the social niche portrayed by favorite magazines or television shows. It integrates disparate elements of life into a dynamic whole that links personal commitments to recognizable niches in the social world. This is a key step in career counseling because it concentrates on what the client wants to do next. For example, the young woman who wanted to free herself from her mother explained that her favorite story was about a girl who goes on a voyage by herself, and this is what she herself did later in a job that had her travel the country. In short, at this point the counselor looks to craft a tentative biography for the client in which the self-concept enters a preferred environment and enacts a script that leads to a life-enhancing career. A goal of counseling is to have clients edit and then adopt this storyline as a form of biographical agency with which to negotiate role transitions.

In the practice case, the client states a script about "a boy who works for a paper and wants to write." It takes little acumen to understand how this script enacts the self-concept in a fitting environment. It is so clear that one wonders how the client who narrates this story does not see it for himself.

Fifth, counselors may consider the client's motto. Its deeper meaning should now be evident. The epigram offers encouragement that clients give to self in pursuing the next step in their life plan. It reinforces whom they are and where they want to go. Oftentimes the saying directly and succinctly provides the wisdom clients seek in entering counseling. The counselor should carefully compare the motto to the client's response to how counseling could be useful to them. The counselor may help the client to appreciate how their motto actually provides the wisdom they seek. It is after all their advice to themselves. I return to the motto several times in the last ten minutes of counseling to make sure that clients hear their advice to themselves and learn that the answers they sought from the counselor were actually within themselves all the time.

In the practice case, the advice given to the client by the client is to examine your own life. The counselor now comprehends how the client

does not see that he is a person who wants to write for a paper or political campaign. The client avoids thinking about it. The reason for coming to counseling is now quite clear; the client indeed wants to seriously examine his life and figure out his next move and distant future. Depression keeps him preoccupied so he does not have to examine the matters. The counselor should eventually repeat to the client many times that now is the time to examine his life, which is indeed his best advice to himself. The examination will clarify the matter because his story is so coherent, continuous, and complete.

Sixth, having identified the script and advice to self, counselors may turn to talents already mastered in examining favorite school subjects and skills being rehearsed in leisure activities. The main idea is to show how these skills are needed to enact the script described in step four or realize the advice identified in step five.

In the practice case, the client preferred studying foreign policy and English. These are excellent subjects for someone who might write speeches, become a political analyst, or entertainment writer. The disliked subjects of science and mathematics lack the imagination and initiative he values. The leisure pursuits of playing improvisational jazz rehearse the self-expressiveness he must cultivate, and building things increases the confidence he needs to take hold of his own life and redirect it where he must go.

Seventh, the counselor, in this penultimate step, brainstorms some occupational titles that may engage the client. Having organized the client's story in the first six steps, possible occupations are usually self-evident. However, to expand the list counselors may turn to a more formal procedure. At this point, person–occupation translation materials devised to implement the classic matching model of career counseling are very useful, such as Holland's typology of vocational personalities and work environments. With Holland's typology, I can assign a type code to each hobby, magazine, school subject, and self-descriptive adjective that the client mentioned during the career-style interview. Using clinical judgment, I sum the results to determine an occupational type code and then use the *Dictionary of Holland Occupational Codes* (Gottfredson & Holland, 1999) to identify occupations that correspond to the client's occupational type code. When they have a list of occupational prospects in hand and the client's career style and fictional goal in mind, I have almost completed the career-style assessment.

In the practice case, it seems unnecessary to consult occupational information booklets. The client wants to write for a newspaper, magazine, or a political campaign. He wants out of biology and into journalism or political science. However, for practice's sake, the client's RIASEC vocational personality type seems to be Enterprising and Artistic (EA). Thus, the

counselor could select several jobs from occupation finders that combine enterprising and artistic activities, such as journalist, columnist/commentator, author, critic, editor, copywriter, creative director, editorial writer, lawyer, politician, actor, technical writer, performing arts manager, and advisor/consultant.

Eighth, the counselor, in this last step, formulates a response to the client's initial request for consultation. It may not be, and often is not, suggestions about educational majors to pursue or occupations to choose. It usually is about clarifying some issue that makes the client hesitant about moving forward. In the practice case, we have the biography of a boy who wants to write imaginative speeches, for either himself or politicians to present. We see that he wants to write imaginative speeches from repeated words he used to describe his role models. From his favorite magazines, we find that the environmental niche is in politic arenas or journalism offices. His favorite television program is imaginative. His preferred script is to work for a newspaper and write. His advice to himself is to examine his life. In examining his life during counseling he will find that he does not want to give up being a science major because his core self-concept is as a person who never gives up. Nevertheless, he will acknowledge that he wants to write, not do science. He could become a science writer, yet he is more interested in writing about politics or entertainment. His difficulty is that he cannot easily change majors because he views it as giving up. He hesitates to move in the direction of his life script because it would violate his core self-concept. The counselor is now quite prepared to respond to the client's request for assistance in understanding why he becomes depressed when he enters the science building.

The counselor's goal in crafting this biographical sketch and initial response to the framing question is not "to be right." As Aristotle noted, there are so many more interesting things to be than *right*. Specifically, Adlerian counselors try to be useful to their clients. In comparing your assessment of the practice case to mine, do not get stuck in the dichotomy of right versus wrong. Instead, look at both assessments and ask yourself, "How useful would these assessments be to the client in easing his self-exploration and prompting occupational exploration and career decision making? Two different assessments could be equally useful.

Career-Style Counseling

Having performed the eight-step assessment of the interview data, the counselor now is ready to begin counseling. This could be in the second half of the initial hour or in a second session. I usually follow a four-part agenda of dialogue and deliberation, if it suits the client's needs. The counseling agenda begins with a summation of understanding. The counselor

retells the client's story in a coherent and crisp manner, and then follows that telling by relating to the storyline the reasons the client sought counseling. In the practice case, the story will be about an imaginative young man who wants to write and work for a newspaper, yet is having difficulty in examining his life because he does not want to give up his current pursuit because it would make him feel like a quitter. A counselor might open the session by saying something such as, "The reason you are depressed when you enter the science building is because it does not reward imaginative, young men who want to write political speeches or social commentaries." A counselor might then say:

> You move through life as a communicator who uses oral and verbal skills to entertain, report, persuade, supervise, and advise other people. Your style includes the use of imagination, persuasiveness, and perseverance to identify and deal with practical problems or challenges. You appreciate the usefulness of writing, politics, performing, teaching, human relations, and managing, and consulting. Your future success and satisfaction may follow the path of writing or speaking about how to make decisions and solve practical problems.

In presenting this summation of understanding, I follow principles taught by Dreikurs. Counselors thoroughly address the strengths and limitations in clients' career styles. They relate clients' ways of doing things to their work habits and attitudes in general and their educational-vocational successes and failures in particular. Two techniques make the discussion concrete. One technique is to *identify examples of clients' career styles* as expressed in their present behavior, preferably during the last five minutes or, if not, some things they said or did during the career-style interview. The other technique is to *ask clients to cite an example* of something they have done during the last week that also expresses their career styles. Clients are so embedded in their own style that they do not realize they *have* a style. We must be sure that clients recognize their career styles before discussing where they are heading.

In pursuing the career-style counseling agenda, Adlerian counselors use the IP counseling methods described in Chapter 6. Their methods involve at least two dimensions of counseling. Along the relationship dimension, they use empathy, encouragement, and humor to maintain collaboration and keep the client's attention on what needs to be done. Along the communication dimension, they use interpretation, facilitative confrontation, suggestion, teaching, and clarification to increase self-knowledge and vocational development as well as to facilitate career choice and commitment to that choice.

After revising the character sketch with the client, who after all is the author of it, the second agenda item deals with interests as criteria in making occupational choices. After helping clients recognize their career styles, counselors discuss interests that clients can use to move toward their goals. I may start by explaining that interests are not simply feelings, they have meanings, both public and private. Then I may discuss how an interest connects a career style to the environment. This lays the groundwork for naming clients' interests, discussing the hidden meanings that their interests hold, and explaining how these interests can be useful to them. In discussing how well various interests serve fictional goals and express career styles, we should be as specific as possible and cite examples from the client's life experience.

To make a client's career path concrete and memorable, some counselors use success formula materials to describe a career path. I use the contents of Table 8.1 to help clients state their success formula. Together we select the three roles that best characterize the client's career style and fictional goal. Then I ask the client to complete the following sentence with one phrase from each of the three roles clusters: "I feel successful and satisfied when I _____." The client picks the phrases and together we arrange them into a success sentence that the client can use to identify and evaluate prospective occupations. For example, one client selected "solve problems" from the thinker role cluster, "help others" from the helper role cluster, and "share feelings" from the creator role cluster. She combined them into her success formula: "I feel successful and satisfied when I help others solve their problems and feel better." The client in the practice case chose the influencer and creator roles to produce the following success formula. "I am happy and successful when I convince others through writing speeches and articles."

Next, in the third agenda item, counselors explain to clients how they may use their interests and success formulas to identify occupations to explore. No one has time to explore every occupation, so each client must identify a set of plausible occupations to investigate. Some counselors help clients do this by systematically describing their preferred work roles, activities, and settings. This discussion develops implicit interests into explicit criteria for screening occupational prospects. For example, following a discussion of this type, the client in the practice case came to say that he was interested in a job that would allow him to play a leadership role, use intellectual and persuasive abilities, and work in an entrepreneurial setting.

Having a short list of occupations to investigate allows the counselor and client to collaborate on constructing an exploration plan. A plan consists of activities that will help clients see choices clearly so that their ability to decide is enhanced. Most clients do not know how to explore and

Table 8.1 Success Formula Elements Grouped by Organizational Roles

Doer	**Helper**
Work with tools	Helps others
Think with my hands	Work with people
Make or repair things	Offer advice
Use mechanical ability	Provide a service
Apply physical skill	Be outgoing and pleasant
Work outdoors	Help children
Work with animals	Help the elderly
Work with nature	Teach
Demonstrate a skill	Counsel
Thinker	**Influencer**
Solve problems	Make decisions
Work with science	Convince others
Work with math	Lead a group
Use logic	Use power
Research ideas	Act with enthusiasm
Figure out how things work	Sell things
Read	Be the center of attention
Analyze situations	Be dynamic
Discover	Have a lot of variety
Creator	**Organizer**
Be independent	Be precise
Share feelings	Be part of a team
Be sensitive	Record data
Paint	Type
Play an instrument	Organize materials
Write	Have a set routine
Apply artistic flair	Know what is expected
Decorate	Carry out orders
Design work in a team	Keep records

clarify their choice alternatives. Therefore, counselors must teach them about exploratory behavior in conjunction with suggesting specific activities that will increase the clarity of their choices.

The fourth item in the counseling agenda addresses how clients use private logic to process career decision-making tasks. On the one hand, if common sense can comprehend and validate their private logic, then counselors may reinforce clients' private logic and apply it to their career decision-making tasks. On the other hand, if common sense cannot comprehend

or validate their private logic, then counselors reveal this to clients and explain how the guiding fictions in their private logic cause their career indecision or unrealism. Invalid ideas in a guiding fiction usually take the form of preemptive distinctions, oversimplifications, or overgeneralizations in a client's fictional goal (e.g., If I were _____, then I would be safe, secure, and significant). The more exaggerated these invalid ideas become, the more they delay or distort career decision making.

An example of how a client's private logic can delay or distort career decision making may be useful here. I recall one client whose ambition was to be respected. However, in his fictional goal he oversimplified respect to mean control: "If people obey me, I will be safe, secure, and significant." He succinctly expressed this mistaken idea in his motto, "my way or the highway." This exaggerated distinction distorted his career decision-making process in that he considered only occupations that offered him respect in the form of power, possessions, and prestige. Because it was irrelevant to his goal, he had not considered how he would contribute to society or how his need to control other people would impair his relations with coworkers and family members.

A client's private logic enters common sense when two people talk about it during a counseling session. By representing common sense, counselors help clients reevaluate mistaken ideas. A counselor may begin by explaining to the client that the mistaken idea is understandable but not necessary. This may take the form of explicating where the idea came from and why it is no longer needed. With clients who mistake respect for control, a counselor might explain how the need to control people served an adaptive purpose earlier in their lives yet how it is now maladaptive. Thus, the need to control people is understandable in light of past circumstances but not necessary in present situations.

In confronting the previous client's mistaken idea (i.e., respect equals control), the counselor should use a phrase that captures the client's imagination and compels him to reconsider the idea. For example, the counselor might impress upon the client that "our way is the highway" leads people to respect him whereas "my way or the highway" leads people to fear him. At this point Dreikurs might ask, "Tell me please, what is more important to you—winning peoples' cooperation or attempting to dominate them and lose their cooperation and respect?" This discloses the hidden reason for their behavior while presenting undesirable consequences to the client without judgment. Further, the counselor may suggest that the next time the client experiences a lack of cooperation to ask himself if it was "my way or the highway" to which others responded?

In the practice case, the client clearly comprehends what he wanted to do for a career. Yet he could not understand why he was stuck and unable to change majors. During counseling he quickly came to understand that

his private logic considered changing majors an admission of weakness that would make him a quitter. However, this cognitive insight was insufficient to enable him to act. It took several additional counseling sessions to encourage him to make the change. It was particularly helpful when he transformed the idea that changing majors would make him a quitter to not changing majors meant that he was giving up on his passion. In short, he would be quitting on himself if he did *not* change majors. This transformation enabled him to move forward with confidence and enthusiasm. Years later, the counselor learned that the client in the practice case had graduated as a major in journalism, completed law school, and worked as a speechwriter for a prominent politician.

While the prototype of career-style counseling emphasizes an agenda with four main topics, seasoned counselors adjust the direction of the counseling dialogue to what the client needs at the time. The agenda of character sketch, interests, occupations, and decision making can be rearranged or partially employed depending on the counselor's assessment. The key point is that the agenda of counseling always deals with the client's unique story, belongingness in the work world, potential social contributions, and meaning-making. The ultimate goal is to encourage the client to choose an occupation that matters to him or her and to the community.

Summary

The present chapter asserted that Adler's Individual Psychology enriches the classic model for career counseling by elaborating its constructs and extending its applicability to a wider range of clients. Furthermore, the chapter explained how an approach called career-style counseling resolves problems that arise in adapting Adlerian lifestyle methods and materials for clients who want to make a career choice. In describing career-style counseling, the chapter dealt with the assessment of career styles, the identification of career paths, and the recognition of private logic in career decision making. It presented counseling methods for interpreting clients' career styles to them and correcting mistaken ideas that delay or distort their career decision making. It also presented materials that counselors may use to perform and assess career-style interviews with clients and articulate their success formulas. Hopefully, as more counselors do career-style counseling, they will increase its effectiveness by developing its methods and devising additional materials. Anyone interested in seeing career-style counseling in practice may wish to review an interview, demonstration, and commentary by the author (Savickas, 2006).