



INTERGENERATIONAL PATTERNS

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*The true journey of discovery
consists not in seeking new landscapes
but in having fresh eyes.*

Marcel Proust

*Our meaning in life – our legacy - comes from our
providing for future generations, leaving a footprint,
contributing to advancing our world, making our
world better for our children and grandchildren –
contributing to the continuity of the species and an
evolving world of beauty, creativity and social
harmony.*

Richard Holloway

All communities have developed family narratives about themselves; that is why the best way to understand a society is to explore its stories.

Richard Holloway

Wealth of Vision

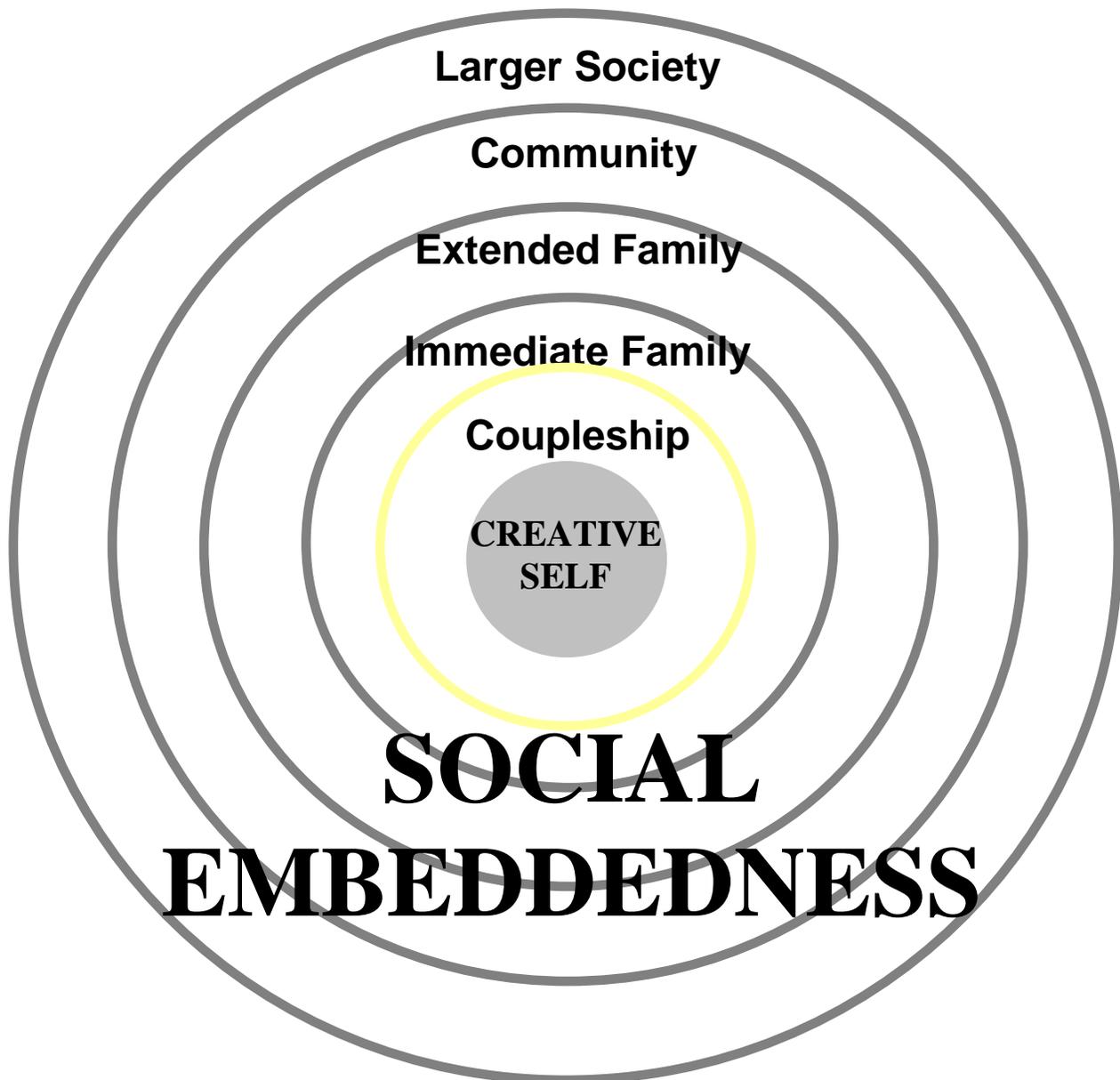
Rich is the one who lives in today, filled with the problems and promises of his/her own times. Richer is the one who lives in his/her own times but sees in them the admixture of all the times that have been.

Rich is the one who sees things newly as if eyes had never before looked upon the earth. Richer is the one who learns to look through the eyes of men and women who have gone before, and adds to their vision of freshness of his own sight.

The Rev. Dr. Kenneth L. Patton (1911 – 1994)

We see things not as they are, but as we are.

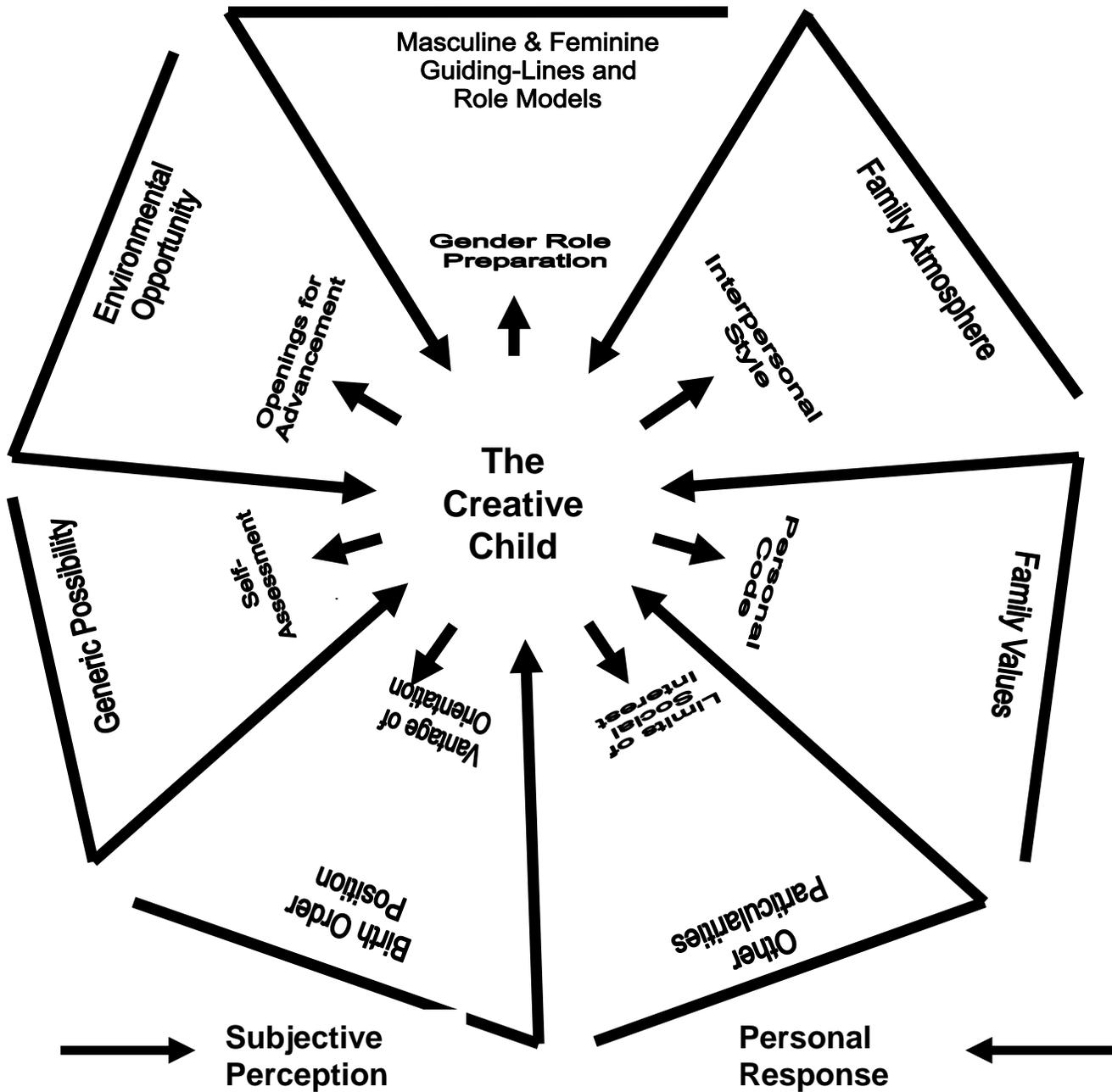
The Talmud



“(T)he whole individual must be understood within the larger whole, which is formed by groups to which he belongs, ranging from face to face to the whole of mankind. We refuse to recognize and examine an isolated human being...Individual Psychology accepts the viewpoint of complete unity and self-consistency of the individual whom it regards and examines as socially embedded. The individual must be seen and must see himself as embedded in a larger whole, the social situation.”

Adlerians view individuals within their social context (e.g., culture, gender, age, socio-economic status, family circumstances, values, birth order, etc.)

Understanding Life-Style



Reference:

Powers, Robert L. and Jane Griffith. Understanding life-Style – The Psycho-Clarity Process

Genogram

A **genogram** resembles a family tree however it includes additional relationships among individuals. The genogram (pronounced: *jen-uh-gram*) permit the therapist and the patient to quickly identify and understand patterns in family history. The genogram map out relationships and traits that may otherwise be missed on a pedigree chart.

Basic principles of family systems outlines the following four essentials:

1. Families are the primary influence in our lives.
2. History tends to repeat itself.
3. Families move through time on a horizontal as well as a vertical continuum.
4. Each individual member must maintain both separateness from and connectedness to the family.

Family Patterns

Messages I was given by my **father/grandfathers/uncles** about:

a) money _____

b) love _____

c) affection _____

d) sex _____

e) decision making _____

f) problem solving _____

g) children _____

h) friendship _____

i) marriage _____

j) religion/spirituality _____

k) work _____

l) recreation _____

m) health _____

n) death _____

Family Patterns

Messages I was given by my **mother/grandmothers/aunts** about:

a) money _____

b) love _____

c) affection _____

d) sex _____

e) decision making _____

f) problem solving _____

g) children _____

h) friendship _____

i) marriage _____

j) religion/spirituality _____

k) work _____

l) recreation _____

m) health _____

n) death _____

Early Recollections

Alfred Adler Wrote (1931)

Among the psychological expressions some of the most revealing are individual memories. Memories are reminders we carry with us of our limits [and strengths] and the meaning of circumstances. The memory represents the story of my life, a story I repeat to myself to warn me...and to prepare me by means of past experience so that I will meet the future with an already tested style of action.

Alfred Adler drew many references from Early Recollections.

- attitude towards life
- direction of the person's striving
- hints why a particular movement was chosen
- perceived dangers to be avoided
- indications of compensatory devices developed to cope with felt inadequacies.
- evidence of courage or its lack
- strategies developed for living in the perceived world
- preference for direct or indirect methods of coping
- type of interpersonal transactions preferred
- presence or absence of social interest
- values given to affiliation, competence, behaviour, status, rebellion, compliance, security
- core wants, needs and motivators

Early Memory Exercise

Choose a memory of an incident which happened to you under aged 10 years.

Describe what you see in the memory focusing on the child's experience.

What feelings does the child experience within this memory?

Write a newspaper headline to capture the essence of the memory.

What gender messages are present in this early memory?

What intergenerational messages are present in this memory?

How does this memory relate to your life today?

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Multigenerational Pains Surfacing as Individual Issues, Concerns or Problems

Alfred Adler noted that issues and concerns in families often spread over several generations (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956). Still, all problems have a purpose, the most common of which is to adapt familiar reactions and responses to safeguarding one's sense of self or self-esteem and to overcoming feelings of inferiority or inadequacy. When problems seem to have a multi-generational life, individuals have a range of reactions, including that people may be unaware of the "beginnings" of problems, often in early childhood, or a feeling of inferiority and helplessness in the face of problems, or even a blaming of past generations for current problems.

Murray Bowen: Multigenerational Transmission Process describes how problems take on a life of their own and get transmitted across generations:

The concept of the multigenerational transmission process describes how small differences in the levels of differentiation between parents and their offspring lead over many generations to marked differences in differentiation among the members of a multigenerational family. The information creating these differences is transmitted across generations through relationships. The transmission occurs on several interconnected levels ranging from the conscious teaching and learning of information to the automatic and unconscious programming of emotional reactions and behaviors. Relationally and genetically transmitted information interact to shape an individual's "self."

A key implication of the multigenerational concept is that the roots of the most severe human problems as well as of the highest levels of human adaptation are generations deep. The multigenerational transmission process not only programs the levels of "self" people develop, but it also programs how people interact with others.

[From: <http://www.thebowencenter.org/theory/eight-concepts/multigenerational-transmission-process>]

Michael White's (2007, 2011) approach to Narrative Therapy also recognizes that life events can be organized into a plot or story that unfolds over time, and that the meaning and experience of problem-saturated stories have real effects in the lives of individuals, couples, and families. His goal is to **externalize** or unpack the problem from the individual, so that the individual may observe the story, take a stand, and decide if there is a preferred story to be lived.

. . . externalizing conversations open gateways to rich story development. . . . intentional understandings—understandings that life is shaped by specific intentions that people actively and willfully engage and embrace in their acts of living—and the understandings about what people give value to, are defined at this point in the development of externalizing conversations, and provide an excellent point of entry into re-authoring conversations. (White, 2007, p. 51)

Each of these models recognize that problems come with a history that has been transmitted through human interaction and interpreted by the individuals living that history in ways that ensure the continued life of the problem. Interrupting that history and choosing an alternative future is at the heart of counseling and therapy.

Reference: James R. Bitter. "Emotions, Experience, and Early Recollections: Exploring Restorative Reorientation Processes in Adlerian Therapy." in **Contributions to Adlerian Psychology**. Xlibris Corporation, 2011, pp.397-414.

I Am Your Child

I am your clay.

*It is your firm but loving touch that will
shape me, my values and my goals.*

I am your paper.

*It is on me that your ideas and feelings will
be recorded, often without your realizing it,
and carried on for many years.*

I am your student.

*It is through the help of your teachings and examples
That I will learn life's most important lesson.*

I am your garden.

*It is up to you to provide me with much-needed care
and attention, but, at the same time, room to grow.*

I am your rainbow.

*It is I who will bring your delight and joy after you've
been through a storm, if only you look closely.*

I am your mirror.

*It is in me that many parts of you will be reflected,
and if you've succeeded in doing your job, the image
will radiate beauty, warmth and love*

I am your child.

Denise Marigold

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