

**THE LAW OF MOVEMENT AND A METAPHOR OF
GEMEINSCHAFTSGEFÜHL: WHAT IS THE ESSENCE OF THE LAW OF
MOVEMENT?**

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The Law of Movement is a fundamental law of Adlerian Psychology. In each psychological phenomenon, in everything around us and within us, we seek, and we always find signs of movement. Remembering Adler's (as cited in Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956) insistence that:

"Although it was necessary to freeze the movement in order to see it as a form, we always maintained the viewpoint that all is movement" (p. 195).

Adler also wrote that:

"The law of movement in the mental life of a person is the decisive factor for his [her] individuality. The declaration of this law was actually the strongest step which Individual Psychology has taken" (ibid.).

Several essential characteristics of this movement are important in our discussion. Although watching a greater mass movement may impress someone as representing a sort of random and not interconnected motion, psychological movement, as Adlerians see it, is very different. It is self-consistent and it is always purposeful. It is unique and subjective.

Adler (ibid.) contented that:

"The whole of human life proceeds along the great line of action – from below to above, from minus to plus, from defeat to victory.

It follows the life-styled path of reaching the self-ideal - that unique, fictional and ultimate "*felt plus*" - by overcoming, "The impetus from 'minus' to 'plus' never ends. (ibid. p. 103) and it is fuelled by one and only one force, "the creative power of the individual" (ibid. p. 177).

We call Adlerian Psychology a psychology of overcoming and we view purposive overcoming as uniquely human. According to Adler (1979/1932): "Everything grows 'as if' it were striving to overcome all imperfections and achieve perfection"(p. 86). He concluded that: "This urge towards perfection we call the goal of overcoming, that is, the striving to overcome" (ibid.).

What Does the Movement Express?

We see movement as an expression of energy, a fully expressed and observable kinetic energy or an innate but not yet activated and developed potential energy. We observe distancing, detouring, moving backward, narrowing the paths of approach, a hesitating attitude and other communally useless and personally growth-retarding dances and marches - all the while catching and encouraging every little move that may signal a better strategy, a new and a more communally useful, dance. We see inevitable drama and the frequent free falls of those moving on a "vertical plane" (Sicher, p. 79), and we try to tackle inevitable Western societal challenges faced by those who dare to move horizontally. We watch the degree and the intensity of activity whether this is useful or aims at sabotaging that usefulness.

Rudolf Dreikurs (1957) reminded us that:

"Even human progress probably depends just as well on the contributions of those who move on the horizontal and on the vertical plane". ... "Many have done tremendous benefit to [hu]mankind actually motivated only by the question of proving how good they are - looking for their own superiority. And others have done a great deal of good - as we call it, in an unselfish way - without consideration of what they may get out of it" (2018, ¶ 8).

Therefore, when considering individual human movement and when viewing it on a communal scale, things are neither simple nor linear. It might all be a matter of a greater picture and, quoting Rachel Shifron (personal communication), "a matter of dosage".

What is the Purpose of Movement?

This is perhaps the easiest question to answer if we remember to see individual movement as goal-directed, communally useful and indivisible - to highlight how human movement is different from all other movements found on this planet and to match a true reading of Adler's theory being an *Indivisible Psychology*.

We never see an individual movement take place in a social vacuum of solitary survival. It always occurs in a social field, among incalculable other movements, crossing or being aligned with the trajectories of others, marked by fictional defeats and victories of lone survival warriors, or by paving the way to perfecting a world by the only real, true and successful form of survival, namely, indivisible survival among human beings. This occurs along with other beings that carry the survival wisdom of past generations and prepare for the useful survival of the next one, in which they all are equal members of humankind.

What is Successful Movement?

In "The Structure of Neurosis", Adler (1979/1932) wrote that:

"The most important characteristic of life is motion. That does not mean that living things cannot be in a state of immobility, but that the capacity for motion is present as long as life exists" (p. 85).

Therefore, any movement is a process of evolutionary adaptation and is a natural law and not a matter of choice. In a 1995 interview, Heinz Ansbacher said that: "If a word cannot be made a verb, it is not a psychology", to which I would add: "If a verb cannot be made an active verb, it is not a useful psychology." Creating and enacting an active

verb is what we do to become fully human, because this is where we exercise our unique human privilege and responsibility - of making communally useful choices.

Since Movement is Not a Choice, What Do We Really Have to Choose?

A matter of choice in this whole process is not about the movement itself. We move even if we may give the impression to an observer that we are standing still, metaphorically or not. An impression of someone *not moving* may just be what Adler (as cited in Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956) discussed as "a form" (p. 195), a frozen moment, what can really be a snapshot of a total movement. Or that can be a result of how hard an individual fights against the communal pressure and natural forces that call on him or her to move.

What we have to choose (and this is where we are unique as human beings) is the direction of our movement, and a possibility of growth that depends on the choice of that direction. Growth adds unique adjectives to our verbs used for movement - it only takes place when we choose a direction for movement that is communally useful and requires us to be actively courageous. This is consistent with Adler's (as cited in Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956) insistence that:

"Activity must not be confused with courage although there is no courage without activity. But only the activity of an individual who plays the game, co-operates, and shares in life can be designated as courage" (p. 166).

How do we Define and Measure Growth?

So far, we have discussed that although we do not choose movement, once on a selected path, we go, or do not go, for growth. Adler (ibid.) explained his Law of Movement, stating that: "... it must be that way to arrive at the solution of problems and the overcoming of difficulties" (p. 195).

We need to see solution and overcoming as the two interconnected ultimate measures of growth. We can state that although not all movement is growth, or result in growth, growth can only be seen as movement, in terms of "the continuous active adaptation to the demands of the external world" (Adler, 1979/1932, p. 32).

We also need to see growth not only as personal development but as a response to an evolutionary call for communal growth and adaptation, and always in a context of "the stream of evolution" and as a part of it. "In this cosmic relation," wrote Adler (ibid.), "in which the life of the single individual is a part, *the striving for victorious adaptation to the external world is a precondition*" (author's italics, p. 32).

There is another aspect of human nature that the Adlerian Law of Movement illuminates, and that is a difference between being and becoming, with an "overcoming" marking this difference and being a core ingredient of healthy becoming.

We have to see becoming as a movement towards an ideal being. Because the ideal being is a fiction - becoming will never end. This poses a question for each of us - who do we become? How healthy is our becoming? What is our strategy when facing a dilemma to overcome or not overcome? The ultimate Shakespearian question: "To be, or not to be," in Adlerian terms, would be: "To overcome or not to overcome." Those who decide not to overcome "suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" and sabotage *Gemeinschaftsgefühl*, while others will decide "to take arms against a sea of troubles" (Hamlet, Act III, Scene I) and overcome it.

Growth is clearly the most direct expression of what we call a third force - a creative power of self. How do we see it? In 1943, Willard Beecher offered a recollection about Adler with a very practical answer to this question. Beecher wrote: "Dr. Adler used to say that if you want to understand a person, put your fingers in your ears and watch only movement" (p. 1), which brings us directly to the second part of our discussion, namely, the body.

The Body

Very early in his career and throughout his life, Adler (as cited in Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956) was fascinated by the indivisibility of human nature and the goal-directedness of its unique design. He observed people's handshakes, walking manners, expressive movement of emotions, mimics and pantomime, physiognomy, handwriting and bodily postures in general as indicating, "the manner in which an individual approaches his [her] goal" (p. 220). The Law of Movement, as Adler explained, is "behind and between the expressive movements" (p. 329).

Amazingly, one hundred years ago, Adler (ibid.) paid attention to both culture and the biology of the human body. He wrote about "the communality of a given culture and the similarity of the human sense organs" (p. 221) as constituent parts of the language of the human personality, which he called "organ dialect" (p. 222).

He stated (ibid.):

"The mind is able to activate the physical conditions. The emotions and their physical expressions tell us how the mind is acting and reacting in a situation which it interprets as favourable or unfavourable" (p. 223).

Adler (2004/1928) also wrote that:

"... common sense can change. It is not something fixed; it is the sum of all recognised psychological movements which are in accord with reason, are generally recognised, and are connected with the continuance of the culture" (p. 66).

So, not only does the body speak the language of one's Life Style. It also speaks that language with an accent!

Communication: Accents, Content and Context

In a post-modern world, saturated with a *low context* culture, language content (words) - and not its context (the body, the tone of voice, etc.) - the rules of interpersonal communication are set from formal to informal, from one-on-one to group processes.

This happens not because high-content communication is always good and effective, but because it seems invariably much faster, more technologically efficient and more convenient, with plenty of ready-to-use templates than non-verbal contextual communication, regardless of the language spoken. Paradoxically, those of us concerned with human interactions even encourage this choice by constantly prompting others to "speak up," "use your words," "speak your mind," and "speak from your heart."

Yet, many years ago, Adler (ibid.) wrote that:

"An individual's opinion of life, which is at the bottom of his [her] attitude to life and is neither shaped into words nor expressed in thought, is his [her] own masterpiece" (p. 188).

Furthermore, he emphasised that "language is inadequate to express the full range of interpretations of what overcoming means" (Adler, 1979/1932, p. 86).

There is a solution to this challenge and the solution is metaphors.

How Are Metaphors a Solution to This Challenge?

Metaphor is at the heart of language and our communal existence on this planet. Our everyday language is full of metaphors - whether we consciously register them or not. Metaphors influence social cognition, consumer decision-making, political voting preferences and dating attitudes. Richard Kopp (1995) wrote that: "Individuals, cultures, social groups, and humanity structure reality metaphorically" (p. xvi).

When something becomes less expensive, we say that prices are *dropping* (metaphorically, we use space for a price!). When we face something very sad or even devastating, we might say, "My heart is *broken*." And looking back at the economy in 1929, we characterise that situation as a *crash* of the stock market. When we overprotect someone, who is - in our eyes - especially sensitive, we might get a comment that we are *walking on eggshells*.

Metaphors are especially important as they help us to comprehend abstract terms such as *love, happiness, anger, goals in life, values* and even our beloved but still very abstract notions of *Life Style, mistaken beliefs* and *Gemeinschaftsgefühl*.

Metaphors are also critical for remembering and understanding how those concepts relate to each other by bringing abstractness into a concrete reality. We cannot talk about things we cannot see, touch, smell, hear and taste, without comparing them to things that we can see, touch, smell, hear and taste!

The more abstract, unfamiliar, complex, unstable or obscure the reality feels, the greater is the usefulness of metaphor as we try to grasp the core of its complexity - whether these are idioms (clichés) or *live* metaphors. And this is especially true for motor and textural metaphors.

How does it Work? Brain Structures Engaged in Metaphor Processing

Think about what happens when you hear that someone had a "*rough*" day, or had to make "*hard*" choices, or when you say that someone's language is "*abrasive*", or when you describe someone's voice as "*soft*", or a reception as being "*icy*".

What is your experience in hearing these words? Try to listen to yourself and locate these experiences within your body.

Brain studies tell us that the parietal operculum - an area of the brain responsible for sensing texture through touch - is activated without receiving any sensory input from the body when a person hears a textural metaphor (Lacey, Stilla & Sathian, 2012). Researchers described the asymmetry of neural firing as explaining the phenomenon (affection is warmth, indifference is cold, but not all warmth is affection and not all cold is indifference). In search of a precise and felt description of affection, or indifference, we opt for those that are known and experienced in childhood; in our case, it is temperature.

During verb processing (in both literal and metaphorical contexts) another area of the brain is activated - the primary motor cortex. Listen to yourself when you hear the words, "*my heart is sinking*," or "*racing thoughts*," or "*standing my ground*." Interestingly, this activation is more pronounced with active *versus* passive verbs. For idioms, it is different. The more idiomatic the metaphor is, the less the motor cortex is activated. However, it can be re-ignited! This may also be different for non-native speakers, whose brain will attempt to reconstruct an idiom and process it literally first, thus activating brain areas responsible for processing (motor or sensory).

According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), the brain processes idiomatic and metaphorical sentences not by deconstructing their syntax, but by igniting memories containing actions with literal meaning in precisely the areas of the brain responsible for actions (i.e., the motor cortex). So, when we say that someone "*jumped*" to a conclusion, or "*runs away*" from problems, or "*dances around*" a difficult decision, or had to "*ditch*" a business offer, or faces a "*grilling*" from a supervisor - the motor cortex of the brain is activated by cumulative memories of all the literal jumps, runs and dances we have experienced personally, or have watched others performing.

The brain processes language by simulating it. In processing idiomatic and metaphorical messages, the human brain ignites its "literal" memories (therefore action-related metaphors will activate the motor area of the brain). Of course, we shall likely deal with vast differences

in literal memories (or even a lack thereof), as explained by both culture and individual differences, and thus depending on the literal memory of an earlier exposure, different areas of motor or sensory cortex could be stimulated, if at all.

Let Us Bring It Back to Our Conversation About "Striving and Movement"

Metaphors are significant in human evolution not only as a part of normal adaptation: new metaphors also allow us to make the unknown *known*, *unfelt felt* and *un-experienced experienced*.

Clichés (dry/dead metaphors) that we often use without intent or thinking, much like Moliere's (1670) Monsieur Jourdain spoke prose, provide a quick and usually safe bridge to deliver the meaning to a culturally and linguistically similar addressee. Still, even clichés like dry wood, can become a great material to re-ignite our imagination, to transform our innate potentiality into kinetic energy, to encourage new neuronal connections and new human ties - and bring about an enhanced and a more courageous and richer movement.

The art of new (live) metaphors in the movement of human beings, human communities and the development of humankind is that they are at the heart of non-linear communication and non-linear human connections in general. Paradoxically, the darkest times in human history have produced the most soul-penetrating art, the most insightful and impactful literature, the wisest and the most precise comedy - all by speaking with metaphorical language, e.g., Picasso "*Guernica*" (1937), Tolstoy's *War and Peace* (2005/1869).

There are times both in human history and in each of our lives, when non-linearity (and metaphors as its expression) is the only decent, healthy strategy in surviving and fighting against marching linearity. In individual striving, a choice of non-linearity *versus* linearity when faced with a challenge is a choice that reveals one's Life Style.

In a still developing, open-ended story about the survival of humankind, the metaphor of *Gemeinschaftsgefühl*, too, was born out of darkness - the darkness of World War I and the Bolshevik Revolution, with its millions of felt, seen, heard, tasted and otherwise experienced meanings. This non-linear metaphor is an ultimate guide to the survival of humankind.

Non-Linearity Versus Linearity: An Ultimate Confrontation and a Solution

Having the ability to choose freely to deal with life's challenges metaphorically underscores some of the most fundamental tenets of Adler's theory. In his 1966 article "*The Scientific Revolution*", Rudolf Dreikurs reminded readers that holism is an essence of human nature (he used the term "quantum" to describe it) and the need to see "spontaneity" in human beings as a creative expression of free will.

In the 1960s, there was significant pressure to produce causative and measurable science of all sorts. On the one side, there were Anna Freud's (1965) "*Normality and Pathology in Childhood*" and Masters' and Johnson's (1966) "*Human Sexual Response*", and on the other hand, the DSM-II (1968). Following his detailed analysis of the state of the sciences (from biology to quantum physics), Dreikurs (1966) called on us to free ourselves from the "law of the excluded middle" and from "the dependency on science as the only source of knowledge" (pp. 9-10). Once again, the significance of the third force - the creative power of the individual (a whole self) - was re-ignited.

In Closure

Let us go back to our conversation about *Gemeinschaftsgefühl* and its place in our movement. It is an ultimate destination of all movements and the only survival solution for humankind, which has been facing the turmoil of wars and civil disintegration on all levels. It is also a beacon for each of us in our individual movement towards our individual and unique "felt plus" - instantly pulling us in a direction of perfecting self and perfecting our communities "on the path to the

absolute truth" (Adler, as cited in Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956, p. 329). It is a highly abstract and clearly a non-linear term, storing a cosmic amount of potential energy in each of us, and thus can and needs to be made a useful active verb metaphor. By creating and then enacting a metaphor of *Gemeinschaftsgefühl*, each of us can do more than sense it. We can - and need - to live this metaphor, not waiting for an ideal community to appear miraculously to us. Instead, we have to live as if that ideal community is already here, as if each of us has an abundance of *Gemeinschaftsgefühl* to experience on all levels and to share.

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