The Art of Counselling

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For anyone who needs to listen, support and advise at work

Rollo May

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To Bob and Roger and Lee
and others of my counsellees whose personalities
cross and recross the pages of this book

Preface

A friend who had taken a position teaching graduate students in education remarked that he and his class had sought a central book for students in his classes. These students did not want to become trained professional therapists but they did want to know the rudiments of the counselling that every teacher needs to do. 'We could find no suitable book,' my friend added 'so we went back to your *Art of Counselling*.'

This book has for me a fateful background. In the early thirties, I had come back from teaching for three years in central Europe, where, in the summer vacation, I had taken a seminar with Alfred Adler in Vienna. On returning to this country in the midst of the Great Depression, I had the good fortune to get a job called Advisor to Men Students at Michigan State University. This tripartite position included teaching a course at the university, advising students in the 'Y', and overseeing student activities in the Interdenominational People's Church across the street from the university in which I had my office.

In those days Freud, Jung, Adler, Rank and other psychotherapists were not taught in universities and were almost unknown in this country. Thus my contact with Adler turned out to be surprisingly useful. Persons with jobs

similar to mine around the country were hungry for information about the procedures of counselling, and hence I was often invited to speak at conferences. Since there was nothing written in the field, or at least that we could find, I was urged to publish the lectures. The result was the original *Art of Counselling*, the first book on counselling produced in America.

In our modern day, strange to say, this 'middle ground' is still largely uncovered. Libraries are full of books on 'pop' psychology, and there is no dearth of books for those interested in the profession of intensive psychotherapy. The crying need is for those who do not wish to be psychotherapists but do need to know something about the inner workings of personality. This need is felt by others than those in education – physicians who often need to counsel the bereaved and to confer with patients on intimate topics, lawyers who are engaged in counselling clients, and so on, not to mention the obvious fields of religion and social work. Even members of corporations wish for knowledge about how to deal helpfully with people who work for them.

Hence, when Gardner Press proposed this revision, I agreed.

This edition of the *Art of Counselling* has been almost completely revised, and I hope in language that will do justice to the significance of the topic and the fascination of the field.

Rollo May

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'*The unexamined life is not worth living.*'
SOCRATES

'*I saw that all the things I feared had nothing good or bad in them save as the mind was affected by them.*'
SPINOZA

PART ONE

Underlying Principles

1
A Picture of Personality

'What is a human being? Here our constructive discussion must begin, for the effectiveness of counselling with human beings depends upon our understanding of what those human beings really are. A man is more than his body, more than his job, more than his social position, and a woman is more than a mother, more than her attractiveness, or her work. These are but aspects through which they express themselves. The totality of this expression is the external mirror of that inner structure which we call, somewhat vaguely, 'personality'. European psychologists would use the term 'soul' in this connection as a translation of 'psyche', but for us in America the word 'personality' expresses more accurately that basic nature of a human being which makes him or her a person.

So we must begin by determining a concept of personality. The counsellor who neglects doing this consciously will do it nevertheless unconsciously – unwittingly working on the assumption, for example, that the counsellee should develop a personality just like the counsellor's own, or like that of the counsellor's particular hero, or like the personality ideal of the particular culture. The wise counsellor will not leave

this basic matter to the vagaries of unconsciousness, but will consciously and reasonably draw up a picture of personality.

For the sake of clarity let us state our conclusion before we begin; namely, that personality is characterised by *freedom*, *individuality*, *social integration*, and *religious tension*. These are the four principles, as the following discussion will indicate, that are essential to human personality. To make a more complete definition, it could be stated that personality is an actualisation of the life process in a free individual who is socially integrated and is aware of spirit.

Is Personality Determined?

The deterministic picture of personality is represented most vividly and persuasively in Freudian psychoanalysis. Unquestionably Freud will go down in history as one of the most influential thinkers of our century. He is a watershed in the history of our endeavour to understand ourselves. Indeed, Freud has robbed mankind of the luxury of being hypocritical and dishonest – which partly explains why he has been so bitterly attacked.*

Freud was born into an age that was calling for psychoanalysis. The nineteenth century had so parcelled up human nature, had so compartmentalised life and reduced moral living to a matter of superficial decisions, that Freud's psychoanalysis was greatly needed. Only in the light of our need can the wide influence of psychoanalysis be explained. Freud came to show us that there was much more to personality than our little systems had allowed. He discovered

* The reader is referred to the brief historical survey of the psychotherapeutic movement. See Note 1, page 199.

the 'depth' in human nature as contained in the profound and powerful realms of the unconsciousness. His centring upon sex as the most influential of human instincts, while too extreme a position to be true in detail, is an inevitable reaction from the hypocritical Victorian moralism that had assumed it could ignore the sex factor in life, cut it out and throw it away, and then go blithely on in 'innocence'.

In his exploration among human motives in the unconsciousness, Freud dug up much that was too ugly to be palatable to a generation that had tried to settle all questions in the 'immediate centre of decision', shelving moral matters by the signing of cards and international problems by the signing of treaties. Freud showed us the ugly side of human nature. Anyone who still believes that human nature does not have an ugly side represented in primitive lusts and savage cruelties has only to look at the war-torn state of the modern world. Our narcissism has led us to condemn Freud as a purveyor of slander and smut; but 'it is only a great idealist,' as Jung says, 'who could have given his life to the uncovering of so much dirt.'

Freud was an analytical genius. And he invented a system for analysing human personality, called psychoanalysis, which teaches counsellors much of value about the function of the human mind.[1] He observed that the adjustments within the individual's mind can be thrown into chaotic disorder by 'repressions'. These repressions actually represent the individual's being dishonest with himself or herself. The process is somewhat as follows: an instinctual urge pushes up from the 'id' (the seething cauldron in the unconsciousness of desires and fears and instinctual tendencies and

every sort of psychic content) and seeks expression in the outside world. But the ego, which stands at the threshold of consciousness and mediates between the id and the outside world, is aware of society's prohibitions against the expression of this particular desire, and so it resorts to some ruse to repress the desire. The ruse is a trick by which the ego says to itself, 'I don't want to express this desire anyway,' or 'I'll do this instead.' But the repression only means that the urge will come pushing out again in another form – this time in some neurotic syndrome such as anxiety or embarrassment or forgetfulness or even some more serious form of psychosis.

When a neurotic patient comes to treatment with a Freudian psychoanalyst, the analyst sets the patient to verbalising associations, which is called 'free association'. During this 'confession', as it is termed, the analyst lies in wait for signs of a repression, such as the patient's hesitating at some crucial point or forgetting or showing pronounced embarrassment. Such inhibitions or blockages indicate a disunity in the patient's mind, a lack of ready flow from the unconscious source of instinctual tendencies into the consciousness and thence into reality. These symptoms are buoys that indicate the existence of psychological conflicts underneath. Now it becomes the function of the analyst to track down this conflict, to bring it out of the unconsciousness into plain sight, and, if it is serious, to relieve it by a process of psychological catharsis called abreaction. The end result is to disentangle the patient's mental snarls, to free the patient from the 'complex', and thus to re-establish some functional unity in the mind.

This liberates the patient to work out some more

satisfactory expression of instinctual urges in reality. Or if expression is impossible, the patient at least is brought to accept consciously and frankly the necessity for renunciation. The central process of psychoanalysis consists of bringing the conflict out of the dark unconsciousness into the light of consciousness where it can be recognised and reasonably handled. 'Our usefulness,' says Freud, 'consists in replacing the unconscious by the conscious, in translating the unconscious into the conscious.'[2]

Among the valuable contributions this system of psychoanalysis makes to our understanding of the human mind is, first, the insight it affords into the tremendous extent and potency of the realm of the unconscious. The exploration of this dark hinterland out of which arise the great forces and motives of life has placed our understanding of humans on a much sounder basis. Psychoanalysis shows, also, that we must take much more into our consideration than the conscious ego. This poor 'general' has a precarious time of it at best, being buffeted about by the instinctual forces from the id, the outside world, and the superego (conscience). Living must therefore be oriented to far deeper levels than merely that of the conscious will. And finally, Freudian psychoanalysis proves that we can never succeed in the moral life by so simple a device as mere repression of every tendency society or our own superego finds unpalatable.

But the danger in the Freudian system of analysis arises when it is carried over into a deterministic interpretation of personality as a whole.[3] The system can become simply a scheme of cause and effect: blocked instinctual urge equals repression equals psychic complex equals neurosis. And the

cure consists theoretically of merely reversing the process: observe the neurotic symptom, trace down the complex, remove the repression, and then assist the individual to a more satisfactory expression of instinctual urges. We do not mean to say that Freudian therapy as it is practised is as simple as this; the therapy has many more creative aspects, and it succeeds precisely because it does not bind itself to the strict causological theory. The danger lies in the influence of Freudian theory in setting up a mechanistic, deterministic view of personality in the minds of the partially informed public, so that people conclude that they are the victims of their instinctual drives and that their only salvation lies in expressing their libido whenever the urge arises.

To be sure, the cause-and-effect system is valid for certain aspects of mind. But it is an error to draw generalisations from this limited area that imply that causological, deterministic principles explain the whole of personality. Freud was seduced by the handy, tangible systemisation of natural science; and he used it as a Procrustean bed on which he laid the human personality and forced it to fit.[4] This fallacy arose out of a failure to recognise the limits of the scientific method. Though the objectivity of science aids us greatly in coming to a useful understanding of certain phases of human mental phenomena, to imagine that the whole of the creative, oftentimes unpredictable, certainly intangible, aspects of human mind can be reduced to cause-and-effect mechanistic principles is sheer folly. Consequently Freud's 'natural science psychology', as Rank called it, was led astray in its theories of ultimate determinism in personality.

If such a determinism is accepted, human responsibility

is destroyed. The thief can say, 'Not I but my hunger stole the apple.' What of purpose and freedom and creative decision on the part of the individual? These things are basic in personality, as we shall observe below.

As a matter of fact, one of the basic presuppositions in all psychotherapy is that patients sooner or later must accept responsibility for themselves. Therefore, personal determinism, which excuses them from responsibility, works in the end directly against regaining mental health. Cause-and-effect determinism holds only for a limited area, namely, the area of the repression-complex neurosis; and when freed from the complex, the patient becomes responsible for creatively working out the patient's own future destiny.

Neurotic persons, in my experience, are often precisely the ones who tend to hold a deterministic outlook on life. They seek to blame something else for their difficulties – their parents, or their childhood environment, or their associates; 'Anything', they seem to be pleading, 'so long as I am not to blame.' This is understandable, for if they once admitted their own responsibility, they would be forced to take steps to overcome the neurosis. There are, of course, an infinite number of determining factors in any personality difficulty; but underneath all, there lies in the individual's own autonomy a point of responsibility and possibility for creative development – and this is the significant factor.

A middle-aged man, manager of a small business in a village, with whom I recently dealt, was in the habit of arguing determinism with great vehemence. He cited experiments with monkeys and every sort of far-fetched pseudoscientific parallel, and seemed bent by hook or crook

to prove that humans are no more responsible for their actions than were Pavlov's dogs for the appearance of saliva in their mouths when the appropriate stimulus was given. When one argues as though one's life depends on it, incidentally, you may be sure that more than objective interest in truth lies behind the passion. One is probably trying to save one's own neurotic scheme from disturbance. Sure enough, it turned out that this man had failed consistently in a number of jobs since graduating from college. He spoke of his college with embarrassment, and then only to point out that college education does one little good in life. This man, we may conclude, *had* to believe in determinism so long as he failed in his own life. It was his excuse; it relieved him of the oppressive burden of his sense of failure. He was determined to be a determinist *by his mistakes*. But the very vehemence of his arguing gave proof of his subconscious guilty feeling about his failures, and hence he argued determinism precisely because he had a deep conviction that he was not entirely determined.

Yes, determinism does operate in some cases, but these are the neurotic cases. Neurosis means a surrendering of freedom, a giving of one's self over to rigid training formulas; and consequently the personality does become a machine at that point. Mental health means a regaining of one's sense of personal responsibility, and hence of one's freedom.

Freedom of the Person

Freedom is a basic principle – in fact, a *sine qua non* – of personality. It is by this characteristic that we separate human beings from animals, the human being having the ability to

break the rigid chain of stimulus and response that enslaves animals. The healthy mind is able to hold different impulses in a state of undecided balance and finally to make the decision by which one of the impulses prevails. This possession of creative possibilities, which is synonymous with freedom, is the first presupposition of human personality.

It is not our purpose here to delve into the philosophical proofs of human freedom, but only to point out that, from the psychological point of view, it is essential to believe in freedom in order to have an adequate picture of personality on which to do effective counselling. This ought not to be called 'freedom of the will', as that implies that a particular *part* of a person is free, and it results in endless discussions about metaphysical determinism that get us nowhere.[5] Rather, a people possess freedom as a quality of their total being. This is not to say, let it be remembered, that there are not an infinite number of determining influences playing upon the individual from all sides at all moments – many more determining forces than the last century with its emphasis on simple 'effort' ever realised. But regardless of how many determining forces affect John or Jane Doe, there is in the end an element by which Mr or Ms Doe moulds the materials of heredity and environment into his or her own unique pattern. Arguing against freedom only proves it the more firmly; an argument – in fact, any sort of reasonable discussion or even the asking of questions – presupposes this margin of freedom.

Students often come to the counsellor and defend a certain irresponsible point of view on the basis of smatterings of natural science to which they have been exposed

sufficiently to see the force but not the limitations. If a personality problem is at stake, the counsellor will not argue the question directly – counselling is never argument. But the counsellor will point out possibilities, and thus gradually bring the student to an acceptance of responsibility for the student's conduct and future.

The psychotherapist Otto Rank definitively explained the importance of freedom and responsibility in psychotherapy.[6] Long one of Freud's closest associates, Rank was finally forced to break with the master because of Freud's refusal to admit the centrality of creative will in the psychoanalytic treatment.[7] Rank held that in the long run we must admit that one creates one's own personality by creative willing, and that neurosis is attributable precisely to the fact that the patient cannot will constructively.[8]

It is possible to grow in freedom. The more mentally healthy the person becomes, the more he or she is able to mould creatively the materials of life, and hence the more appropriate the potentiality of freedom. A counsellor, therefore, who helps a counsellee to overcome a personality difficulty has helped him or her to become more free.

To summarise our first principle of personality, freedom, in the form of a guide for counselling: *It is the function of the counsellor to lead the counsellee to an acceptance of responsibility for the conduct and outcome of his or her life*. The counsellor will show the counsellee how deep lie the roots of decision, how all previous experience and the forces of the unconscious must be reckoned with, but in the end will aid the counsellee to appropriate and use his or her own possibilities for freedom.

Individuality in Personality

The second principle that is basic in personality is individuality. Persons who come to the counsellor with personality problems have this difficulty because they cannot be themselves – cannot, in other words, individuate. 'The neurotic type,' Rank pertinently says, 'which we all represent to a certain extent, suffers from the fact that he cannot accept himself, cannot endure himself, and will have it otherwise.'[9]

In the end, one has only one's self through which to live and face the world. If people cannot be themselves, they certainly cannot assume any other self no matter how greatly they may wish to do so. Each self is different from every other self; it is unique, and healthiness of mind depends upon accepting this uniqueness.

Consider the infinite variety in persons! A crowd in a shopping mall appears to move like a stream of marbles, each person wearing the same poker face – but look beneath the protective mask and how wonderfully variegated and unique are the aspects of each individual! The counsellor will be continually amazed by the uniqueness and originality of each story. Sometimes, after a fatiguing series of interviews, I find myself subconsciously assuming that I must have met all possible types of persons and that the next one will be only a boring repetition. But scarcely has this next one progressed but a few sentences when I realise that here is an exciting novel I have never read. One is overcome in wonder at nature's resourcefulness in creating them 'male and female' and everyone different. The counsellor feels like crying with the psalmist, 'When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers … What is man? … For thou has made

him but little lower than God, and crownest him with glory and honour.' It is this uniqueness of each person that we as counsellors seek to preserve. The function of the counsellor is to help the counsellee be what destiny intended him or her to be.

The mistakes in life occur when individuals try to act some other role than their own. The student who inveterately says the wrong thing at social functions is not to be pigeonholed as inherently tactless, but may be possessed of an inner fear which makes the student try to act an alien role – and, of course, the result is blunder. Many instances of young people slipping into loose sexual practices are to be understood as a result of their fear of being themselves and their consequent desperate clutching at another role. Getting drunk, it is obvious, is a form of escaping one's self. When a young man gets 'tight' before a party, he is arranging things so that he will not have to be himself at the party. The pertinent question is not, why does he drink too much? Rather, it is why does he feel he has to flee from himself? It follows that we should set up a social programme for our young people in which they can be themselves and get satisfaction from it. Such social functions would be the best kind of exercise in personality health.

It is self-evident that psychotherapy works fundamentally on this principle of individuality. Rank explained it as the aim of his method: 'To say it in one word, the aim is self-development; this is, the person is to develop himself into that which he is.'[10]

The definitive statement on the subject of individuality comes from the renowned Swiss psychologist, Carl Jung.

His work, *Psychological Types* was so pertinent to modern needs that his terms 'introvert' and 'extrovert' have become common parlance. Extroverts live in such a way as to correspond with objective conditions, or demands that originate outside themselves; they tend, like business people or soldiers, to emphasise activity.[11] Introverts, on the other hand, are oriented primarily to subjective data; poets and philosophers and lovers of scientific research tend to fall in this category. There is, of course, no hard and fast line; we all have more or less introvertive and extrovertive tendencies. Jung realised that his system, which he developed much more intricately than here indicated, is simply a frame of reference that gives very general pointer readings. It is neither right nor fruitful to pigeonhole people. Jung himself, significantly, was the psychotherapist who most emphasised individuality. It is helpful if we keep a very pliable frame of categories for reference, but let it be remembered that in the end there must be a unique category for every individual.

In America there is a tendency to identify extroversion with personality health and introversion with illness. We tend to be extroverts because of our pioneer, activist background and our present preoccupation with business and industry, linked with an underemphasis, especially in the past, on cultural pursuits. This is the mischievous error of assuming that *our* particular type is the only healthy type. The youth who is essentially the artist, or the reflective philosopher, or the devotee of scientific research may be made psychologically unhealthy by being pushed into the position of a commercial salesperson. Of course, the caution against becoming *too* introvertive is sound, and it is even more

dangerous to be too introvertive than too extrovertive, for society can be depended upon to help beat the extrovert off any egocentric tangents. But the ultimate aim is that the individual find his or her own unique role.

The most vicious mistake many counsellors make is in trying to compress their counsellees into a particular type – usually the type to which the counsellor belongs. The counsellor did not join a fraternity in college, and so assumes it is better that the student not join. The professor studied very hard as an undergraduate, and so may advise the sophomore to let up on social activities and plunge into books. These are crude examples, but the point will be clear; namely, that there is always a vicious tendency for the counsellor to view the counsellee in terms of the counsellor's own attitudes, moral standards, and general personality pattern, and consequently to project these upon the counsellee, thus violating the autonomy of the counsellee's individuality.

There is good ground, then, for the advice so often bandied about, 'be yourself.' But it does little good simply to tell one to be oneself, for the trouble is precisely that one does not know which self one really is. The counsellee often feels a number of conflicting 'selves', and to tell one merely to be oneself is to make confusion worse confounded. One must fast *find* oneself and this is where the counsellor comes in.

The counsellor's function is to help the counsellee find what Aristotle speaks of as 'entelechy', the unique form in the acorn which destines it to grow into an oak. 'Each of us carries his own life-form,' says Jung, 'an indeterminable form which cannot be superseded by another.'[12] This life

form, the real self, reaches into depths in the individual's mind far below ordinary consciousness; consciousness may even present a distorted mirroring of it. One finds oneself by uniting one's conscious self with various levels of one's unconsciousness.

At this point it is necessary to describe and define more clearly this important realm of the unconscious. Everyone has experienced the fact that only a small portion of one's mental content is conscious at any given moment. Mental content moves through consciousness in a stream – like film moves in a reel across the light of a movie projector to throw an everchanging picture on the screen. The old simile has it that the conscious portion of mind compares with the unconscious as the tip of the iceberg rising out of the water compares with the much larger bulk of it floating under the surface. Certainly our minds reach infinitely deeper than any momentary area of consciousness – how deep we cannot determine, for unconscious means 'unknown'. We can only postulate the unconscious and observe how it manifests itself functionally. Persons who have become habituated to thinking only in the limited terms of calculable science sometimes hesitate to postulate the unconscious; but to do that is to cut off the great bulk of our mental life. What of all the memories, past experiences, knowledge, *ad infinitum* that are not in our conscious minds at this particular instant but which we could summon there at a moment's notice? No experience is ever lost, theoretically. Nothing is really forgotten, and childhood experiences leave their force upon the persons even though they may shrug their shoulders and think the matter lost and gone forever. Memory and forgetfulness and

other problems of the unconscious are intricate matters, and there is still much knowledge to be gained about them. Our functional interpretation pictures the unconscious as a great storehouse including every sort of psychic content: fears, hopes, desires and all kinds of instinctual tendencies. But it is a dynamo even more than a storehouse, for out of it come the drives and tendencies which consciousness merely directs. 'The great decisions of life,' Jung rightly said, 'have as a rule far more to do with the instincts and other mysterious unconscious factors than with the conscious will and well-meaning reasonableness.'[13] The unconscious may be viewed as a series of levels. This concept corresponds to actual experience, for an experience of childhood seems to be much 'deeper' than one of yesterday. Freud spoke of the 'preconscious' as that portion of the unconscious just below consciousness. We may term this preconsciousness material that can rise immediately to consciousness, plus childhood experiences and repressed material, the 'personal unconscious'.

As we plumb deeper into the unconscious, we find more and more material which the individual possesses in common with other individuals. Jung gave the useful term 'collective unconscious' to these deeper levels. The French or citizens of the United States, for example, hold much material in their unconscious which they did not experience themselves, but which they absorb from their national groups. This will have a certain connection with the history of their nation, but it is transmitted in much deeper ways than through history classrooms and textbooks. The pioneer experiences of early Americans carry through with some force into the unconscious of a modern American, though the latter is several

generations removed from the actual pioneer life. In primitive societies where the collective consciousness is greater, it is quite difficult to tell where the experiences of the forebears leave off and those of the present begin. An even deeper stratum of the unconscious is that which we possess in common with all other members of our race, or deeper still, that held collectively by members of the western world.

And, finally, there are certain patterns in the unconscious which the individual possesses in common with all humankind. Jung calls these 'archetypes' or 'primordial images' – defined as the patterns or ways of thought which persons possess simply because they are human. These archetypes have a relationship to the basic structure of mind. This explains why mythology, though springing up among peoples of diverse races and periods in history, exhibits common patterns.

Is the collective unconscious inherited or acquired from one's culture? Jung's answer is direct: 'We mean by collective unconscious, a certain psychic deposition shaped by the forces of heredity.'[14] As a matter of fact, the source of the collective unconscious is not the pertinent problem; we observe how it works functionally, and it certainly is true from this viewpoint that these basic ideas, as they appear even in the mythological creations of children, come from something deeper and more organic than what the individual could have learned from his or her educators. Specific ideas, of course, are acquired from one's environment, and we are not arguing here that all human ideas are 'innate'. But there must be something structural in mind comparable to the structural form of body which would develop along

certain general lines even though the individual were isolated on Crusoe's island. Plato was wrestling with this same difficult problem of describing the function of the collective unconscious when he explained, mythologically, that man is born with certain ideas which carry over from his previous existence in heaven. And so Plato held knowledge to be a reminiscence or a process of tapping what is already deep in one's unconscious.[15]

Great poetry and art and philosophy and religion spring out of this collective unconscious of humanity. The great artist, like Aeschylus or Dante or Shakespeare, taps these deep levels of human sorrow and joy and fear and hope, and serves as an artesian well through which eternal patterns spring into expression.[16] A classic in literature or art is the expression of psychic images which the individual possesses in common with all other human beings. Later we shall discuss the implications of the locating of religion in the collective unconscious. Here let us only note that 'conscience' is given a new validity. Conscience is something more than a residue of one's parents' teachings, more than an expression of social solidarity; it reaches far back into the mysterious sources of our being.

To get back to the individual who comes to the counsellor with a personality difficulty. That person needs to find his or her true self, and this is accomplished by arriving at some degree of unity of consciousness with the unconscious levels of childhood experience, the deeper levels of the collective unconscious, and ultimately with that source of his mind which is in the very structure of the universe. It now becomes clear why the neurotic individual can never be

healthy while blaming childhood training for the trouble, as the person *is* to some extent that childhood training, and in fighting it is fighting himself or herself. Likewise, individuals who are continually at war with society can never attain personality health, for they are struggling against certain forces in the collective unconscious of their own minds.

Finally, they who struggle against the universe, who deny meaning in the universe and try to break off connection with it actually are struggling against the deepest point in themselves, where they are connected with the universe. This is another way of saying that the individual has the roots of his or her collective unconscious in that creative structure of the universe which are infinite. In duelling against Infinity, one is actually stabbing the rapier into the deepest portions of one's own soul. Discussion of this important matter must be reserved for the final chapter.

Suffice it to say here that when individuals truly find themselves, they find their society and they find their roots in the spiritual sources of the universe.

From the second principle of personality, individuality, we derive this guide for counselling: *It is the function of the counsellor to assist the counsellee to find his true self and then to help him or her to have courage to be this self.*

2

The Search for One's Self

Personality cannot be understood apart from its social setting. This social setting – the community of other persons – gives personality a world without which it would have no meaning. The social setting furnishes the pegs to which personality attaches the lines of tension of its web, to carry through the simile of the last chapter. We know this to be true in our own experience, for each of us uses other persons as pivot points; we pivot around our enemies as well as around our friends.

Social Integration

Thus the third aspect of healthy personality is *social integration*. So important is this aspect that people have fallen into the habit of assuming that personality difficulty means social difficulty, and that an individual who is a social success must have solved any personality problems. This, of course, presupposes a superficial view of personality – as when the word is profaned in cosmetic and 'how-to-be-a-social-success'

advertisements. But profoundly viewed, a meaningful social adjustment is basic in personality, for the person must move in a world that consists of other people. A chief characteristic of the neurotic is an inability to get along with other people. He or she is highly suspicious of others, feels society to be an enemy, and moves through life as though in an armoured car. A man recently explained to me that he had spent his vacation trying to get away from his relatives, and then remarked incidentally, 'I never trust anyone.' Even though this is a common remark, it is a bona fide sign of a neurotic attitude towards society. Such an individual is bound to be lonely, as he forces himself into as isolated and comfortless a position as a machine gunner fighting all for himself on a mountain top. In this matter of social integration, we are most indebted to Alfred Adler,[1] that other Viennese who, with Freud, made Vienna the mother city of psychotherapy. Dr Adler noticed in his early psychological work in the first years of this century that the neurotic is especially characterised by an inability to make connections with other people and the social world. Adler observed, too, that no one can separate oneself from one's social group and remain healthy, as the very structure of one's personality is dependent upon the community. The child would not have been born except for a social act on the part of its parents, and it could not have survived a day without the care of the family. At any given instant, every individual is dependent upon countless other persons of the present and every previous time. To get a vivid glimpse of this social interdependence, simply call to mind the long train of persons upon whom you are dependent for the bread on your dinner table, or for your ability

to say the multiplication table. We live in a social constellation in which every individual is dependent upon every other individual just as the stars in the solar constellations hang upon the lines of gravitational force emanating from every other heavenly body. In fact, this web of interdependence theoretically includes every individual who lives or ever lived. Even a person who denies this interdependence and fights against it, like Nietzsche, is still dependent on it in the very act of attacking it. The sense of interdependence is continually cropping up out of the collective unconscious of the misanthropic individual who refuses to admit it consciously. Adler calls this interdependence the 'love and logic which bind us all together.' As opposed to Freud's concept of sex libido, Adler sees the dynamic force in the individual as a striving for power. There is an urge within the individual (in the centre of the self we term the 'ego') to gain superiority over others, to attain a position of security which cannot be threatened.[2] This is similar to, but not identical with, the 'will to power' concepts of such philosophers as Nietzsche and Schopenhauer, but Adler's 'will' is more a 'will to prestige'. It is that basic impulse that makes the individual tend to break out of the web of social interdependence and set himself or herself, by competitive ambition and vanity, above his or her peers.[3]

This brings us to the most famous contribution of Adlerian psychology to modern thought, the concept of inferiority. The inferiority feeling (it should not be called 'complex' until it has become definitely neurotic) is universal. Every individual has it as part of being human. John Doe feels inferior to the people around him at a social function and is