Management Through Encouragement: Exploring The Adlerian Encouragement Model and Its Ramifications in the Synagogue Environment

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July 1985
FTA Thesis
INTRODUCTION

Alfred Adler's Individual Psychology is one of the oldest, and still most relevant, schools of psychological thought. It emerged during Adler's nine year association with Freud as an alternative to Freud's approach.

Alfred Adler was born on February 7, 1870, in Penzing, a suburb of Vienna. He was the second of six children. His father was a middle class Jewish merchant, and his mother was a housewife. In his early childhood, Adler suffered from poor health and was involved in a motor accident. As he grew older and his health steadily improved, his interest in medicine led to a medical degree at the University of Vienna in 1895.

Adler became a practicing physician in Vienna. In the fall of 1902, Freud invited him to join his discussion groups, which later grew into the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society, of which Adler became President in 1910. Adler resigned from the Society one year later, in part because of Freud's pressures for uniformity and strict adherence to his theory. It should be noted that, contrary to popular opinion, Adler was not a "disciple" of Freud (he was never psychoanalyzed by him). He was a colleague, and his ideas were often in conflict with Freuds.

After he severed his ties with psychoanalysis, Adler devoted himself to developing his own system of thought. In 1912, the Society for Individual Psychology was born and counted among its members a large number of those that had belonged to Freud's Psychoanalytic Society and who had left when Adler did. After participating in World
War I as a medical officer, Adler created numerous child-guidance clinics in the Vienna Public Schools to serve as training vehicles for teachers, social workers, physicians, and other professionals. Adler demonstrated his techniques in front of groups of professionals—an instructional idea that had never been used before. In spite of the revolutionary nature, the guidance clinics grew rapidly in Vienna and throughout Europe, and at one point, there were nearly 50 of them. But soon political and other obstacles began interfering with the growth of Adler's psychology in Europe.

In 1926, Adler made his first lecture tour in the United States. After that his visits became more and more frequent, and eventually, in 1935, he fled Europe and settled in the United States, where he taught and lectured extensively. His death in 1937 in Aberdeen, Scotland, while on a lecture tour, left his disciples, many of whom had fled the political unrest of Europe, to carry on his work.

One of the basic premises of the Adlerian approach is that we are primarily social beings and that our behavior can be understood only in terms of a social context. Interaction with others is a continuous, lifelong process that begins in infancy, when we are entirely dependent on others for our very survival. Later, we need to cooperate with others in order to realize our goals and function fully.

Each human being is born with the capacity to develop what Adler called Gemeinschaftsgefühl—narrowly translated as "marked social interest." It is the willingness to cooperate with others for the common good and the awareness of the universal interrelatedness of all human beings. As members of the human community, throughout life all of us must meet three major "life tasks", which Adler defined
as society, work and love. Adler believed that the extent to which a person successfully shares with others, contributes through work, and forms a satisfying relationship with another is a revealing indicator of the individuals overall personality and level of maturity.

(In addition Musak and Dreikurs (1917) have identified a fourth and fifth task only alluded to by Adler. The fourth task is a person's dealing with spiritual self in relation to the universe, God and similar concepts. The fifth task concerns the individual's success in coping with self as subject, I, and as object, me.) Throughout life the goal of belonging is a fundamental expression of human nature. We decide which groups are important to us and strive to gain their acceptance. The countless formal and informal groupings that exist in any society attest to our goal of belonging and to have a certain place that we value. Many of our problems and anxieties stem from the fear that we will not belong or be accepted by groups we seek to join. When we perceive that we cannot do the job or make the grade, we fear that we will not be accepted by others. Our sense of belonging remains unfulfilled, and that is when we become anxious and unhappy.

It would seem we relate to one another with varying degrees of success. One measure of a person's good mental health is the extent and effectiveness of that persons current interaction with others. Negative interpretation of self can be reversed by encouraging a person to increase and improve interaction with others, so s/he can experience self worth and, at the same time, be given the opportunity to share her or his abilities with others. Thus, the focus shifts from self to others.
Every time two people come in contact, both individuals are influenced to move in a more "turned-on," encouraged direction or in an open "turned-off," discouraged one. When we are discouraged we tend to discourage. And when we discourage others, we become more discouraged ourselves. By the same token, when we encourage someone else, we are encouraged as we realize the positive contribution we can make in helping others develop their "inner courage." This is very much against the popular belief held by some people that the more we put other people down, the higher up we go. Many psychologists today even deal with depressed clients by recommending that they do something to make someone else feel good. Apparently when we extend ourselves and what Alfred Adler called "social interests," we become personally fulfilled. Encouragers are described as people who listen without judging or condemning. Discouragers, contrarily, are described as people who are not effective listeners. We could range some behaviors of people from being totally
discouraging to being totally encouraging to others. Consider a few characteristics:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISCOURAGING</th>
<th>ENCOURAGING</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ineffective listening</td>
<td>Effective listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focuses on negatives</td>
<td>Focuses on positives</td>
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<tr>
<td>Competing, comparing</td>
<td>Cooperative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threatening</td>
<td>Accepting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Using sarcasm, embarrassment</td>
<td>Using humor, hope</td>
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<tr>
<td>Humiliates</td>
<td>Stimulates</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recognizes only well done tasks</td>
<td>Recognizes effort and improvement</td>
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<td>Disinterested in feelings</td>
<td>Interested in feelings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Basis worth on performance</td>
<td>Basis worth on just being</td>
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Encouragement is the key ingredient in all personal and professional relationships. As a synagogue administrator, MY PROFESSIONAL SKILLS + MY ENCOURAGEMENT SKILLS (COMMUNICATION, RESPECT, ATTITUDE) = THE MOST EFFECTIVE ME.

Encouragers believe that, in the long run, relationships based on encouragement, mutual cooperation, mutual respect, shared involvement for a broader base of ideas and decision making, and mutual responsibility are the most productive. In the encouraging relationship more energies are freed to be used in constructive, creative ways as imposed to retaliation and game playing.
People have the capacity for constructive change in their lives, and this change is more likely to occur in the relationship with a person who is encouraging. The interest in helping people grow and reach a fuller development of their resources is visible everywhere today. In business and industry personnel, the management is aware of the effects of worker alienation, job apathy, active and passive rebellion, and it spends millions annually to overcome this costly trend. Each day, in every organization every employee decides whether the company will make a "profit" from him or her for that day. When people feel that they don't count and their contribution is insignificant, they become less responsible and less productive. As members of an organization experience encouragement training they become more effective in combatting worker alienation, poor moral, employee stagnation and apathy. In the end they realize that it is the people who make the difference. An encouraging supervisor helps employees see the values of their contribution to help them recognize the significance of their role. This invites further personal involvement and motivation.
In synagogue administration, the executive director's role interfaces a large variety of types of people. The administrators' relationship to the Rabbi, Cantor, Educator, Support Staff, Officers, Board of Directors and the Congregation at large presents a challenging arena for this person to become an encouraging force in the temple community. If the administrator is going to be an encouraging participant, it is important for her or him to understand why people behave as they do. Encouragement is the method of motivating people. Thus, it is important to understand motivation - the reasons for behavior.

Our lay leadership shows us that we all have a desire to belong to someone or something. Our religion develops and continues on the basis of this goal. People become fulfilled as they have a feeling of belonging. Their self-acceptance and acceptance of others comes from their social interest, their willingness to participate in the give and take of life, and their desire to identify with others. If we are to encourage our active participants in the synagogue, we must learn the ways in which these people feel accepted. People can only get a feeling of acceptance by belonging to something they value.
Management through encouragement on the part of the temple administrator, speaks to all the factions and positions involved. Let us look at the administrators role as supervisor of his or her own staff. There are some people who manage through intimidation and discouragement and others who manage through encouragement. Intimidation can occur in several ways. Some may intimidate by demanding an unrealistic standard of perfection from those whom they supervise, control, or lead. This often results in the individual believing s/he cannot possibly meet the expectations of others; hence the individual does not even try. Some intimidate by playing the game, "Can you top this," so that no matter what the individual has accomplished they are stimulated to tell of their own, greater accomplishments. This type of intimidation is usually found in the shadow of the successful, for it is there that such intimidators can shine most by pointing out how they have achieved even more.

Often, we do not know the difference between praise and encouragement. To some people, praise and encouragement appear to be the same process. It appears this way because praise and encouragement both focus on positive behaviors. However, we can understand the differences if we look at the purpose and effect of encouragement and praise.

Praise is a a reward based on achievement. It is an external reward and communicates, "If you do something I value, I will recognize and value you."
Encouragement focuses on effort, improvement, and the individual's resources and assets. It searches for the positive. It is not competitive nor interested in comparisons. It is aimed at helping the person develop self acceptance and a feeling of being worthy. The motivation is internal.

There is a fine line between praise and encouragement that may be pointed to as dangerous. Praise is a method of control to get others to do ones' will. However, when praise is over done, it can have damaging effects. This is particularly true when a person begins to believe that his or her worth depends upon the opinions of others. Praise actually can help produce discouragement since a person can rarely meet another persons standards and then would be seldom praise worthy. Also, if the person fears being unable to merit praise again, s/he may give up and may not even try. Again, when someone perceives such high standards it becomes a deterrent to encouragement.
The role of the temple administrator and temple president is a position of mutual encouragement. It is helping one another to focus one's ability to manage temple life constructively. It pertains to focusing on internal evaluation (since, as the president of a congregation so aptly put it, it is the nature of the position to be "cussed and discussed"). It is the responsibility to each other for the president and administrator to recognize each one's efforts and improvements and to focus on assets, contribution, and appreciation. In their mutually supportive role each person learns courage to be imperfect and the willingness to try. And, most importantly, through self evaluation the administration and lay leadership learn to accept efforts of self and others.

The board of directors of any given synagogue is made up by more types of personalities than it has members. The administrator's role of encouragement vis a vis the board of directors is a process whereby one needs to focus on each individuals resources in order to build that persons self esteem, self confidence and feelings of worth. As with the relationship of administrator to staff, encouragement involves focusing on any resource which can be turned into an asset or strength. It's really quite easy to identify and encourage all of the most wonderful abilities that a person may have in life. However, not all people have these assets. The challenge is to take traits which can be liabilities, such as stubbornness and excitability, and see how they can become resources, such as determination and enthusiasm.
Stubborn people are often individuals we tend to avoid. We may not see anything positive in stubbornness. However, if this trait can be applied to situations where persistence is important, this liability becomes an asset. Easily excitable people may consider their excitability a deficit: but if they convert this into enthusiasm it becomes a resource in their relationships. When we focus on a resource in order to encourage, we are searching for the positive. Focusing to encourage is like focusing a lens so that the image is sharper. We pick up the positive by accentuating it and ignore the negative. It's kind of like the song says, you've got to accentuate the positive. We can look at a person's liability of being over involved as becoming an asset of being energetic. We can decide that a person's liability of being angry can be turned into an asset of being assertive or standing up for what one believes. Very often a reassignment of tasks can best determine how to turn liabilities into assets and then we are better able to look further for untapped resources. This is applicable to both board and staff.

Although therapy is not the temple administrator's job, it is a challenge extended to all of us that we leave people feeling better as a result of their contact with us. How do the people around us feel as a result of their contact with us? Do people at work look forward to seeing us? After their contact with us, do they leave more able to courageously meet life's challenges? Do we find our colleagues coming to us to be "recharged"?
All of us need to have self esteem and be considered important and valued. To transmit confidence to other persons, our attitude as temple administrators must say:

1. You are capable.
2. Go ahead and try.
3. Mistakes are to learn from (no mistakes, no learning).
4. I encourage at the individual's pace, not mine.
5. I encourage in the direction of the person to meet his or her goals, not mine.
6. I accept attempts and efforts.
7. I accept the individual as s/he is so that the individual can accept self.

In every human relationship some of the most powerful forces are expectations. Expectations influence and move us because they can be tied to our goals. Because most of our behavior is goal directed, we are more influenced by goals than by any other factor. Our expectations are communicated non verbally as well as verbally. A smile, frown, or grimace all communicate support, concern or caution. Value the person as s/he is. This involves believing that the person has resources in her or him to meet all life's challenges. Being valued means you are all right and I accept you as you are. Valuing an individual as s/he is, is an attitude of complete acceptance. The acceptance is unconditional, with no strings attached. This eliminates conditional relationships that have brought about discouragement. It gives the individual freedom to chose to grow or stay the same.
Without faith, one certainly wouldn't be in this profession and showing faith involves having confidence in those one would encourage. It is believing in the person without evidence that he or she is believable. When one shows faith in another person, one believes in the person and shows it through not only verbal encouragement but also silent support. For example when one believes enough in an individual one does not call to check whether that individual has done as s/he said or ask how things are going. In these incidences one is silent and restrained support speaks clearly, "I believe in you." "I know you can handle it." Faith expresses the belief that the person will know when to move or make progress. It is the role of the temple administrator to provide in his or her relationships a nurturing source of encouragement. To produce this climate there are at least four skills that are needed:

1. Listening
2. Responding
3. Conveying respect or confidence, and finally,
4. Showing genuine enthusiasm.

Whenever difficulties arise in a relationship within the temple family, it is necessary to return to these cornerstone skills.
The bottom line of being an administrator is effective communication which involves a thorough understanding of the other person's world (listening) and conveying that understanding to that person (responding). Try through accurate listening and responding to break down barriers that hinder mutual understanding. So much of an administrator's job is involved with accurate listening to staff, colleagues and members of the board of directors. Accurate listening involves, first of all, creating a setting that shows the speaker that one is involved and fully attentive. This of course can be done through eye to eye contact and having a relaxed body posture that shows one's presence. Also accurate listening involves perceiving the speakers messages both verbal and non-verbal with accuracy. Encouragers listen unselfishly and non-judgmentally to the words and feelings of both the encouraged and discouraged person. People communicate in many ways. Encouragers are not only aware of the theme of the speakers words and feelings but also of the theme of the speakers non-verbal behaviors. A plan for being an encouraging listener includes:

- listening to expression of feelings
- showing genuine enthusiasm
- focusing on resources
- helping others see alternatives
- seeing the humor in a situation
- focusing on efforts
- combating discouraging beliefs
- encouraging commitment
- encouraging mutual feedback
Encouragement requires that we develop a special language, a language that communicates confidence. If we are to communicate confidence, we can do it best be reaching into our own depth of positive feelings about ourselves and our belief in people’s potential to move confidently toward challenges.

When we communicate confidence, we are then able to see the value of the half full as opposed to the half empty glass. This means that we are able to focus on a person’s positive traits – patience, perseverance, energy, steadfastness, concern – and communicate our recognition of these traits. Discouragers are insensitive to the purposes of others and thus make light of the energies of others. Encouragers, however, give others energy and enthusiasm, thereby nourishing their movement.

How many times in the life of a temple administrator are we asked, “what do you think about this or that?” Our reaction is like a traffic light for a persons growth. An enthusiastic and genuine green light of understanding can be a signal that will stimulate a person’s courage. Yet to be effective, our enthusiasm must be genuine.
There are two other important areas in becoming an encouraging person. One is mutual feedback. Listed here are Hansen's eight conditions for effective feedback:

1. "It should describe, not judge."
2. It should be specific, not global.
3. It should be immediate, not a reflection of past.
4. It should be usable in other relationships as well.
5. It should be based on receiver readiness.
6. It should be done with respect for the receiver's freedom of choice.
7. It should be tasked involved, not ego involved.
8. It should be about behavior that the person can control."

The other all important skill for the encourager to consider is humor. The creative humorist looks for new ways of defining the concerns of people. Discouraged people think in terms of superlatives such as "this is the worst" or "the most horrible thing that could happen is." Yet they never truly confront these "worsts." If they did, they would recognize that they are logically absurd. The humorist helps people to explore and confront their worsts. In this process, people begin to realize that 1) it is unlikely to occur to that degree, or 2) if it does, the person could then adjust and act accordingly. Within the temple family there is a pitfall that all of us all take ourselves and each other too seriously at times. The encourager needs to utilize humor to sometimes put a situation back into perspective.
At the very heart of the whole discouragement process is blame. This may be blame of self or others. One may be tempted to blame oneself or others for a discouraging moment. Actually, the question of the encourager is "Where am I now, where am I going, and what is my next logical step?" We may all be discouraged at times when we don't receive any feedback from people who we are encouraging. This doesn't mean that nothing has occurred. Discouraged people are not likely to express how they feel, since many times they feel that what they experience doesn't matter anyway. Therefore, one cannot expect to change years of a discouraged persons life over night. We need to keep ourselves motivated by using these same skills on each other. The day will come - perhaps years from now - when someone turns to us and says, "Thank you, you were the most encouraging person in my life."

As temple administrators we are a talent scout. The professional talent scout must be able to envision the potential of a person with additional training and maturity. They search for talent in the raw, or diamonds in the rough. There are companies that drill for natural resources and they must be able to judge from the surface and samples whether material has the potential to be productive. As we train ourselves to find neglected resources and find traits which need to be released, we become a valued resource to each person.
Especially in the day to day activities of Temple management, what characterizes the courageous person is her/his conviction that s/he can work toward finding solutions, and, what is most important, that s/he can cope with any predicament. The ability and willingness to accept anything that may come without feeling defeated and without giving up in despair, and the expectation that one will be capable of maintaining one's value and self-respect seem to be the outstanding features of the courageous temple administrator.

Temple administrators all need to become The CREEP — Constantly Ready to Encourage Each Person — working at enthusiasm and focusing on the positive, the other person's world, and the great feeling the encourager develops by giving encouragement.
The courageous way of looking at new ideas and experiences involves moving from.................... to..........................

1. Immediately rejecting new ideas just because they are not consistent with my current beliefs.

1. Being open to new ideas as possible sources of growth.

2. Seeing newness as a threat.

2. Seeing newness as an opportunity.

3. Agreeing with ideas just because they are held by friends, relatives, or any group.

3. Agreeing with ideas when the new ideas make sense to me.

4. Seeking sameness on the job, or eating certain foods, or vacationing at the same spot, etc.

4. Seeking out new experiences in life.

5. Living every day in the same way.

5. Living every day in new exciting ways.
The courageous way of speaking involves moving
from................................. to.................................

1. "I can't

2. "Things shouldn't or mustn't be this way."

3. "I am this way."

4. "They say...."

5. "I could never...."

6. "All," "None"

   "Terrible," "Catastrophic"

1. "I will

2. "I would prefer that things wouldn't be this way. But just because I prefer it doesn't mean they shouldn't be."

3. "In my past ,I was this way."

4. "I say...."

5. "I am going to succeed at...."

6. "Some"

7. "Unfortunate, "Inconvenient"
A PLAN FOR BECOMING MORE ENCOURAGING

Assets as an encourager:

Things that restrict one or keep one from being more encouraging:

Responses which interfere with being encouraging:

BECOMING LESS:

______ demanding  ______ threatening  ______ correcting

______ punishing  ______ lecturing  ______ other

BECOMING MORE:

Listening to Feelings  Seeing the humor in a Situation

Responding  Focusing on Efforts

Showing Genuine Enthusiasm  Combating Discouraging Beliefs

Focusing on Resources  Encouraging Commitment

Helping Others See Alternatives  Encouraging Mutual Feedback

Being Respectful
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