

BEGINNINGS

PART II -

* * by Alan Dunn * *

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Evelyn

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.....the recollections are probably not in keeping with what actually happened, but Adlerians should understand that.....I'm off to London, England tomorrow, Thursday, September 5 (1979).....Pearl, I am doing this job with some misgivings, because my recollections of those early days of TAIP are at best spotty and inaccurate. However, if it will help the Institute, I'll make a stab at it.....I discovered Dr. Dreikurs and Adlerian Psychology in 1967 at the convention of the American Personnel and Guidance Association, which, in those palmy days, I attended every year. I was finishing my first year as co-ordinator of guidance services for Etobicoke, and I was feeling very strongly the need for a sound psychological basis for the emerging concept of guidance in the elementary grades. As I recall it now, the convention program in introducing Dreikurs, said something about the Child Guidance Clinics established by Alfred Adler in Vienna following World War I and that Dreikurs had been involved in that movement...Anyway, I went to the session to see what it was all about, and found it was in a small room with only a few dozen in attendance. Dr. Dreikurs spoke first, outlining what Individual Psychology stood for and why it was important for teachers. Then, Bernice Grunwald took the stand and told how she was using these basic principles in her classroom, which I believe, at this time was in Garry, Indiana.....Well, suffice it to say, I left that meeting convinced that I had found the model I was looking for. It all seemed to click. It added up, and made better sense than anything I had found so far. I wrote to the Institute in Chicago for more information, and received a courteous response which got me going in earnest.....and the more I read and thought about it, the better I felt about it.....

.....Things happened quickly after that, and I have no records at hand to help me sort them out chronologically. Things began also to move on several fronts at once, which compounds my difficulty of recall. However, let me pursue the small meeting at the A.P.G.A. in 1967. At the same convention in 1968, Dreikurs was featured again, and of course I attended, and this time it took a very large room to hold the group, a positive indication that just at this period Adlerian ideas were suddenly capturing the imagination of school counsellors. Well.... I believe it was 1969, perhaps 1970, in any case the convention was in New Orleans, and at this time a demonstration of Adlerian Family Counselling was scheduled with two of Dr. Dreikurs' trainees serving as counsellor and co-counsellor. I can't remember now who they were, but it could have been Dr. Bill Pew and Oscar Christensen. No matter. The point I would make is that the demonstration was set up on a stage in the largest hotel ballroom in New Orleans, and there was standing room only, with about sixteen hundred people squeezed in. It was the greatest attendance by far of any item on the entire convention program.At every A.P.G.A. convention the Adlerians got together of an evening for an informal social hour, quite apart from the convention, and I recall those happy occasions with Dr. Dreikurs' reminiscences and his assurances to us that Individual Psychology was on the move.....

Alan Dunn.....

.....Having thus discovered Dr. Dreikurs, it wasn't long before I realized that he already had disciples in Toronto. My discovery of this came about in this way: In 1968-69 the Etobicoke Board of Education sponsored Part I of the Guidance Course for teachers and I had responsibility for the course. In April, as a sort of special treat, I brought in Dr. Dreikurs from Chicago to address several sessions on the Saturday. The Etobicoke Public School Principals' Association collaborated, and sponsored a public address by Dr. Dreikurs on the Friday evening in a collegiate auditorium. It was at this time that I had a visit at the Board office from two women who were to become close friends and co-workers in the years ahead. These were Edith Dewey and Marion Clapham. From them I discovered that this was not Dr. Dreikurs' first presentation in Toronto, and that Edith, Marion and others were already involved in parent study groups using the book, Children: The Challenge. They spoke of plans for a Toronto Association and hoped that I would become involved. If I recall correctly, there was an informal reception at Marion's place...after the Friday evening meeting, at which organizational plans were discussed; it seems to me, also, that Pearl Cassel attended the Saturday presentations, and that this was how and where I first met that other great lady of the Adlerian thrust in Ontario, Pearl.....Shortly thereafter, Edith and Milton Dewey called an organizational meeting to discuss formation of a Toronto Association. I recall two such meetings early on, one at the Dewey's apartment in Don Mills and the other in a home in the Beaches district. And, of course, it was not long before TAIP was a reality and things were really moving. At this distance events sort of swim together for me now, but the one clear memory is the growth and development that the next few years brought. Evelyn Piltch has demonstrated this in the extracts from the minutes which she has reprinted under "Beginnings." Each year several practising Adlerians, including Dr. D., himself, were brought in to do training workshops and public demonstrations. The parent study group movement went into high gear. Edith and Milton started talking about an Alfred Adler Institute for Toronto. Edith worked untiringly on every front. Under her leadership, we ran several demonstration family counselling centres and we had a number of effective training sessions for family counsellors. Much of this has already been told and is on the records, and so I don't need to even try to detail it.I can't let it pass, however, repeating what most people already know, and that is that without EDITH DEWEY in Toronto, there would have been no Toronto Association of Individual Psychology and subsequently, no Alfred Adler Institute of Ontario.....

.....My involvement in Adlerian activities was, of course, influenced by my role as Co-ordinator of Guidance Services for Etobicoke. A co-ordinator is expected to keep abreast of developments in his field and to suggest fresh approaches through in-service sessions and demonstration programs. Thus my Adlerian involvement saw me as a publicizer and a facilitator rather than as a practitioner. I found myself conducting workshops and giving papers both within and without Etobicoke. I believe it was largely at my urging that the Ministry of Education developed an interest and organized several short summer courses for school counsellors which were staffed and run by TAIP members.....

Alan Dun.....

.....I was particularly gratified when I was approached in 1970 or 71 by the Public Health Nurses in Etobicoke to run a series of evening in-service sessions for them on the theory of Individual Psychology and its application in parent study groups and family counselling. The first series was so successful that a second series was requested the next year. I honestly believe that these nurses were the keenest and most involved students I ever had in any groups.....included in the groups with the nurses were several social workers with the west-end Catholic Children's Aid Society, and these people, too, became very much involved and we had a long and interesting association as a consequence.....Another event I recall with interest about these evening training sessions..... One evening a teacher from the Borough of York came in and asked to sit in on our sessions. Of course, we were happy to have her, and she stayed to become a star student and subsequently a leading Adlerian school counsellor.....her name is MAL PYPER.....

.....One day in 1973 a public school principal called me to see if I could run a Children: The Challenge study group in his school on Wednesday mornings from 9:15 to 11:00. I cleared with my superintendent and the group started to meet.....there were about a dozen mothers in the group, all with children in the school. Well, it turned out to be one of those groups that refuse to disband, and so instead, we expanded and started meeting in the evening at the Board office. This was the beginning of the **ETOBICOKE FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION**, which now has a great track record and is still going strong.There were dozens more of Adlerian involvements I could speak of, but time forbids. It was the best of times with the best of people, but I'm not going to start naming names because the list would be a long one.....As you recall, Pearl, I left Etobicoke Board in 1974, spent a year at the Faculty of Education in Queen's and then moved full time here to the farm in Hastings County north of Belleville. While the farm consumes most of my energies, I'm not completely out of the Adlerian game, not by a long shot.....I keep up my membership in AAIO and in NASAP, and occasionally I allow myself to be bullied into teaching a short course or running an in-service. In fact, last fall, I conducted a brief course for the Public Health Nurses of Hastings and Prince Edward County, and right now I am working with Margaret Harris to get some training in this area for Adlerian Family Counselling.....And so it goes.....It's possible to retire from being a teacher, but you can't ever stop being an Adlerian.....

Alan Dunn

