Conversations With Henry Stein

James J. Wolf

Abstract

This article was compiled from several audio- and video-recorded encounters with Dr. Henry Stein over the years, starting in 1996 and through 2013. The interviewer, Jim Wolf, is a licensed marriage and family counselor in the San Francisco Bay area who has collaborated closely with Stein for more than 30 years. The interviews cover Stein's early development and education, his collaboration with Sophia de Vries, and the development of the Classical Adlerian Depth Psychotherapy approach. The article then focuses on current activities undertaken to promote Adler’s original method and theory by means of current technologies.

Keywords: Individual Psychology, Alfred Adler, Henry T. Stein, Sophia J. de Vries, Alfred Adler Institute of San Francisco, Alfred Adler Institute of Northwestern Washington

JAMES J. WOLF (JW): Dr. Henry T. Stein was born in 1932 in New York City. He is the director of the Alfred Adler Institute of San Francisco and Northwestern Washington, and is a practitioner and teacher of Classical Adlerian psychology. He is undoubtedly the foremost proponent of Classical Adlerian Depth Psychotherapy in the world today. Henry, could you tell us a little bit about your background—especially things you think are relevant to your personal interest in psychology and your development as a person? Whatever has led you to follow the path you have been on?

Early Life and Influences

HENRY T. STEIN (HTS): What helps is having been through a study analysis with Sophia de Vries and getting some insight into, at least in her eyes, what my roots were.¹ I also think probably that some of my strongest roots, I would say, are philosophical. As long ago as when I was in my early teens I had a very passionate search for meaning, for understanding. I couldn’t say I was interested in psychology at that time, but I did have an interest in philosophy, and a good friend of mine, Isaac, also had an interest and we would sit together and talk about Jean-Paul Sartre.²

JW: The meaning of life.
HTS: Existentialism and the meaning of life; and this was wonderful especially for two kids in the Bronx who were playing stickball in the afternoon and then taking a break and having a malted or a chocolate soda and then we would talk about philosophy. Isaac actually introduced me to these ideas, which were very provocative; and so the ideas of “What does life mean?” and “Why are we here?” and “What is this all about?” were quite fascinating. We also went to Hebrew school together preparing for our bar mitzvahs; but we wanted something a little broader than what was being taught in Hebrew school. That is where it started and I think that is where the thirst began.

JW: I know there’s a strong intellectual tradition in Judaism. It sounds like you grew up with some religious training?

HTS: A little bit, enough to get me through my bar mitzvah. Yes, there is a tradition there that I did appreciate, which is that of questioning and discussing; a lot of discussion that I would say was quite nourishing.

JW: Was there intellectual stimulation in your family?

HTS: A modest amount. First of all, my father died when I was 7 years old, so there was a period when I did not have a paternal figure in the home. My mother had to work very hard to keep us together. So, to some degree my brother—who was 3 years younger—and I were on our own. Although she took good care of us and was very responsible, we had to do an awful lot, and so a lot of my education was essentially going to the library and getting books and finding these sources myself.

I must say my early interests prior to philosophy were in art, in painting and in drawing. That was also very nourishing. I guess you would say it was feeding the spirit at a very early age, and my mother was very encouraging at that level. I had an aunt and uncle who were both musicians. My uncle was a concert pianist and my aunt was a music teacher, and I remember visiting their home and being introduced to more philosophy and the arts, and that was quite fascinating.

JW: I’m thinking of a community feeling and social interest. It sounds like, as you talk about your family, there was a sense of connectedness with friends and family?

HTS: There was, yes. There was one thing I did like about the family: There was a kind of warmth and a family feeling. Although I can’t say I remember my family was altogether delightful.

JW: What do you mean?

HTS: Oh, I had a rather unpleasant uncle.

JW: Was that your father’s brother or mother’s brother?

HTS: It was actually Mother’s brother-in-law. I recall he was a very autocratic and a very dominating man and I didn’t like him. I created a little bit of a disturbance in the family when I stood up to him. I was told I’d “better
apologize and don’t talk that way” and I said his behavior was objectionable. “But he is your uncle!” “I don’t care who he is,” I replied. So that got me into a little bit of trouble, but I felt it was a worthwhile dispute.

JW: Do I hear a strong democratic impulse?

HTS: I guess you could call it that; or it was rebelliousness at the time. Sort of, “American Revolution: Don’t tread on me” was the feeling and that was a good strong feeling I had very early. My mother wasn’t entirely happy with that, nor was my uncle.

JW: You lost your father at a young age. Do you think that the absence of a father figure was a strong force in your life? Did you look for something to fill that gap? I’m wondering if the interest in philosophy was a kind of searching for a path.

HTS: I think that is a good point. I did feel that influence missing and I had to, I guess you could say, supplement it in a way. I had a couple of very fine uncles, but I didn’t really spend much time with them. I had an uncle who lived in Ohio and I looked up to him very much. A scientist who I thought was wonderful, but he was at a distance. I guess the idea of looking for an influential paternal figure must have been there maybe unconsciously. I don’t think I was aware of doing that.

I think it helps to explain why, when I was involved in the arts, I drifted somewhat into architecture and became passionately interested in the work of Frank Lloyd Wright. That was a period when I thought, “Well, gosh, it would be the most wonderful thing in the world to go to Arizona and study with him.” And I actually went to school studying architecture in New York, at Cooper Union. Knowing what was wonderful architecture, and then having a sense of what I was capable of, I just didn’t feel that I had the vision to become an architect. Later on I realized what the problem was. It was my limitation at three-dimensional visualization in part. There were other factors, too.

JW: How long were you on the path to become an architect?

HTS: Quite a few years. I went to Cooper Union for several years at night—and then I went into and came out of the army. Architecture has always been in the background as a kind of a hobby, or just a cultural interest. The figure of Wright was always there as a man who I could imagine it would be wonderful to study with and be with.

JW: Did you find any strong role models in the army? [Laughter.] I’m joking.

HTS: What saved me in the army was humor. I looked at the situation and thought some of the stuff is unbelievably absurd. “If I take it seriously I am going to be a very unhappy guy,” I told myself, so I basically began to make fun of it in a way. Without getting into trouble, I amused myself and some other people at the time. You could say that I was somewhat of a company clown, but I could play both sides because I also made
Soldier of the Week. After I did that, I decided I had enough of that. I mean how much could you really tolerate?

JW: So I assume you spent maybe 2 years in the army?

HTS: The 2-year minimum. I was happy to get out.

JW: You went back to school after that?

HTS: In the army I studied cartography. They put me in mapping school. So I had a chance to do something fairly interesting: drawing maps. But while I was in the army I discovered the theater. I was, frankly, bored. I was beginning to consider taking correspondence classes in engineering.

JW: How did you discover the theater in the army?

HTS: That was somewhat of an impulse, but it was interesting. As I told you I wasn’t too wild about the whole structure of the army. I realize that it was somewhat necessary along certain lines to train people in this way for military service. One day I was in Louisville, Kentucky, and I was reading the post newspaper and they were holding tryouts for a play. I think it was a musical called *At War with the Army,* and it suddenly grabbed me and it was like, “This means something to me.” I went down, I had no theater training, but I thought, “If that is what they are doing, here is a place where I can express myself.” They never did that play but they did something else, and they needed actors. I was totally inexperienced, but I got cast in a play and I found that it was very interesting. It was part of my, you could say, artistic impulse coming out in a way.

JW: Sounds like that sparked a very strong interest and you went in that direction for a long time?

HTS: Yes. Basically I had first gone in the direction of architecture and realized that my interest in mathematics was stronger than my capacities as an architect. I also went into engineering for a little bit—this is before and during the army. Then, in the army, I discovered the theater and, actually, for one point when I was a few months from leaving the service, I was stationed in San Francisco and I got involved in theater again out here. That was not an army post theater but theater in San Francisco. I decided to go back to school and study theater; it was that interesting to me. So, I went to San Francisco State University, continued on and finished my bachelor’s degree there in theater arts.

JW: How old were you at this point, was it early 20s?

HTS: Yes, 21 to 23 or 24 years old. Then I continued on and went for my master’s degree in theater, still at San Francisco State. I went for a variety: learning acting and set design. I was quite good at set design. My art background helped, my architecture background helped, too; and I found that set design was more compelling to me than architecture in some respects. Then I discovered directing and that got me very interested.
James J. Wolf

JW: What was it about directing that grabbed you?

HTS: It was the issue of translating what people think and feel into movement. And it was also, I guess, at a very early age I wanted to understand people and I didn't know how I was going to do that. In the theater one portrays character and if you portray character then you have to have some kind of understanding.

JW: Of human nature?

HTS: Of human nature; and while I was in the theater I discovered the works of Constantin Stanislavski, the great Russian director and theoretician. His work started me studying what it meant to analyze a fictional character. I was also taking acting lessons in San Francisco from a fine teacher, Loren Gage.

JW: What was it about Stanislavski’s view of human nature that attracted you?

HTS: I’m not sure if he actually said “human nature.” I think he was actually talking about the fictional character, but it was like he was trying to make it lifelike. What he said was, “In order to understand a character one has to establish the character’s super-objective,” he called it, his overall goal.

JW: His fictional goal.

HTS: Right, yes. I thought this was wonderful stuff. It appealed to me aesthetically. Then he said, “You have to break it down into smaller units.” All he said about developing a character and analyzing a play made a great deal of sense to me; and it was quite fascinating. I still didn’t really connect it with psychology yet, but it was sort of an understanding of a person artistically, if you would say that. Then the more I got involved in directing the more I realized that what I was learning about human nature through the theater was not quite deep enough.

JW: I imagine by directing, in some ways you are managing the actors. I would assume that you are dealing with fictional characters, but you are also dealing with the actors and actresses themselves, and probably there is drama on a lot of levels there.

HTS: Oh, yes. That is one thing the theater did give me: an incredible workout both in terms of interpersonal relationships and dealing with crisis. If you want a place where there is a crisis frequently, then work in the theater; they are all over the place. You are right, the fictional character was one perspective: How do I make this person seem real or the audience won’t accept them. Then here is his real character, with very real problems, which has to adapt to this fictional character. You might have an actor who has great insecurities who is playing somebody who does not, things like that. That was quite fascinating and that demand started me searching, and I logically went in the direction of psychology, asking, “What can it teach me about character?”
JW: You say, "logically," but I’m not sure everyone would have gone in the direction of psychology. I’m not sure that other theater directors have pursued this path.

HTS: That is a good point. Well, it seemed logical to me. At least I like to browse. Somebody called it "the grazing principle." I used to go up to the library and intuitively pick out stuff and look at it: playing hunches. And that is one thing that I have trusted for a long time: playing hunches. So I would go up and would spend some time; and then I thought to myself, "Well, how am I going to find more about interpreting character?" I read all of Stanislavski’s books. I read the works of Michael Chekhov on building character. I read the works of other people and I thought, "This is quite fascinating." I think I had come across something in one of the theater journals—probably about Freudian interpretation of Hamlet or something like that—and I thought, "Oh, these people aren’t on the right track." So I went to the library and started looking at books by Freud and I read some of the material, and I thought to myself, "I don’t know how I’m going to use this in the theater; I just don’t know. Maybe it is true, but I don’t know how I’m going to use it."

JW: Do any of his works, in particular, jump out at you when you are in this recollection of reading Freud?

HTS: Well, to translate everything into a sexual impulse in the theater was a distortion of how I wanted to interpret plays or what playwrights had contemplated or considered. But in fairness I also looked at the work of Jung, and I thought, "This is fascinating!" But once again it was like it was very involved and very deep, "But how am I going to use this?" It didn’t grab me right away. Not that I studied it in its entirety, but I sampled it.

JW: Was it in this sampling and browsing that you came across something by Adler?

HTS: Yes, I came across one of Adler’s books. I think it probably was What Life Should Mean to You [Adler, 1931] at that time. The minute I started reading his work I connected with it. I said, "This makes sense; this paragraph makes sense; and this whole chapter makes sense." Not only that: I said, "I can use this!" And then it hit me like a thunderbolt: "He is saying the same thing about real people that Stanislavski said about fictional characters."

JW: The super-objective.

HTS: I thought, "My God, this is unbelievable!" So, that got me all fired up.

JW: Was that your first real exposure to psychology during this period?

HTS: Absolutely.

JW: Have you ever been in therapy or been in an encounter group? I think "the human potential movement" was getting going at that point.
HTS: At that point I was—I wouldn’t say I didn’t need therapy, but it wasn’t on my mind. After all being at school, involved in the theater, and also having to work and support the family. My wife—who was an actress and not employed outside the home—and I had two daughters. I didn’t have time for much else.

JW: You say you were working in addition to going to school and being involved in the theater. Were you working in the theater at that point?

HTS: Basically, I was going to school on the GI Bill, which wasn’t enough to cover expenses. I had to supplement that by working on campus. I worked in the audiovisual department showing films. I got so fascinated that I thought, “Wouldn’t it be interesting to see really good films?” This is at San Francisco State and such films weren’t offered, so I started their film series out there. I said, “Why not?” And since I already knew how to use a projector, and I found out one could rent films, I started a very modest film festival there. I charged something like 50 cents or something like that. We got to see Akira Kurosawa’s films and great French films and Italian films and film classics from many countries. All of this stuff for 50 cents and it really started to develop. We went from a tiny little room to a big one. I remember one time I was able to get [Sir Laurence] Olivier’s *Hamlet*! We showed it in the main theater, and we sold out and there were people around the block. I was in show business!

JW: That sounds exciting.

HTS: It really was exciting. It was marvelous! But, anyway, that was one of the jobs. I didn’t make any profit doing this film festival; that was just for fun. I would show films for classes and be paid by the hour. I worked in the library for a while. Then I also needed to make money in the summer so I worked as a draftsman using my old engineering skills. So that was a pretty busy period.

**Professional Development and Collaboration with Sophia de Vries**

JW: Getting back to psychology, I remember at some point you made contact with Sophia de Vries and perhaps some other Adlerians?

HTS: Yes. Well, what happened was once I started reading these Adler books in the library—and San Francisco had a fair number of them—I was hooked; it was fascinating! But I reached a point where it was like, “Are there people who really use this and who believe it?” “Wouldn’t it have been great to meet Adler or at least meet an Adlerian?” I asked myself. Then I think I read in one of the books—it may have been one of the journals—that there was a society, a North American Society of Adlerian Psychology. So I contacted them and asked, “Are there any Adlerians in
San Francisco?” They gave me the names of three people and I said to myself, “I have got to meet somebody.”

JW: Do you remember the names of all three?

HTS: Yes, I remember, but I will only mention one of the names. I went to see one man who was delightful. He had studied in Europe and I wanted essentially to not only find out more about it, but I also wanted to study with a person like that. I didn’t know exactly how one did this. He was quite delightful but he was involved in a project to create some kind of special department at a university here. That was all he was interested in, doing that, and he asked me if I would be interested in helping him do it. And I said, “Not really,” I had something else I wanted to do. So he was interesting but his focus was different.

I also spoke to another person who seemed very bright and knowledgeable but my feeling was that the way she behaved and her attitude was antithetical to Adler’s ideas, his philosophy, and I did not feel comfortable with her. I thought to myself, “This woman contradicts in her behavior what she talks about.”

JW: So because someone claims they are Adlerian they may not really live Adler’s philosophy.

HTS: They may not only claim; they may even understand the theory. But if they don’t internalize it and digest it and live it, then they become a contradiction—perhaps not only to the students, but to the clients. I have attended a number of conventions and this is something I have become quite sensitive to. Sophia deVries helped me become sensitive to it. That is, to really be what we call a Classical Adlerian one has to internalize the theory, the philosophy, and one has to bring oneself in line with that so that it is a living, breathing thing for you. If not it creates problems. Sophia was the only one of the three who it seemed to me was a kind of a living example of what this was about, so I worked with her.

JW: Do you recollect your first encounter, your first impression of Sophia?

HTS: I went to her home in the Oakland Hills [California]. She was a very warm and very gracious woman, a woman with great dignity, a very giving woman, a very accepting woman. She invited me in and we sat and talked on her deck for a while. It was summertime. We discovered that we had a lot in common, particularly an interest in architecture, Frank Lloyd Wright, and the arts. I felt an affinity with her. She was a person who was very bright and very sharp and could almost see through you—in a comfortable way. It was like you wanted to be seen. I essentially asked her what she would suggest. I told her I wanted to learn Adlerian psychology so I could not only apply it to myself, but apply it to my work in the theater.

JW: How old were you at this point?
HTS: This would have been the late 1950s, so I was in my late 20s.
JW: That is young.
HTS: What came out of it was her recommendation, which was she suggested I do a study analysis with her. I could continue studying Adlerian psychology from the books I had, she said, and the ones she would suggest. She would help me understand the theoretical part, but that we would also apply it to me, my life, and my difficulties. I was having some personal difficulties at the time. We would also apply it to my work in the theater. So I would see her on a weekly basis, and I would do a great deal of reading. I was reading practically nothing else but Adler at the time. It did help my work in the theater and it did help me in my personal relationship.
JW: Is that something you feel comfortable talking about in a little more detail?
HTS: Whatever, it's your interview. [Laughter.]
JW: Really, what I am interested in is how you, as a unique individual, developed. Kind of, what was your path in becoming a Classical Adlerian therapist and making this commitment in your life? Do you understand what I'm asking?
HTS: Not exactly.
JW: It just seems to me that, in becoming a therapist, especially an Adlerian therapist, we have to work on ourselves. You have to square away who you are. As you said, you have to live the philosophy. I mean, finding the courage to overcome difficulties. I'm just really interested in what your personal experiences have been that have added to your development as a therapist—the things that you have continued to overcome at a personal level that has contributed to this development.
HTS: OK. That's fair enough. Sophia really helped me to see some of the things that I needed to conquer both in my personal and my professional life. One of the things I needed to conquer in my professional life was making a very full commitment to the theater or whatever I was doing. Which I was tempted to do, but the theater is a tough business to make it in; and also, having a family, there was certain insecurity about being able to do that. Since I was working fulltime and doing the theater at night, it was double duty; but it was psychologically based on a certain insecurity, too. One could go into the theater full-time, but it would have been one hell of a gamble. That was one issue.
Another issue that had to be dealt with was going back to the roots of losing my father when I was very young. She made a very wonderful suggestion and she introduced me to another therapist, a man who had a practice in Walnut Creek [California]. She had met him and she had also heard about his work doing marathon group treatment. His name was Joe Potts and he happened to be not only a therapist but a minister. She said she thought it might be interesting for me to meet him or even
work with him a little bit while I was working with her. I went to see him and he invited me to participate in the marathon. That was right at the time when I needed to be working through something emotionally. I participated in a two-and-a-half-day marathon. It started Friday evening and went to Sunday afternoon, and boy that was something! There were about 10 or 12 people and I was absolutely amazed at what he did with great imagination, with great passion, with great insight. He was not an Adlerian. I think he was kind of a mix of [Carl] Rogers, [Eric] Berne, [Robert and Mary] Goulding—God knows what else—but he was very creative.9

jw: Sounds like this laid the foundation for the marathon work you did later on.

HTS: Yes. I think he also represented a paternal figure who was very strong, loving, sophisticated. I had a personal relationship with him. He also encouraged me to participate in his weekly groups. Since I had already studied psychodrama he said, “Why don’t you try out what you know here?” He gave me some free rein, which I thought was very encouraging.

jw: So you wound up co-leading the group with him essentially?

HTS: Experimenting. I hadn’t had any real training but the point is I was making these connections between psychology and the theater—and psychodrama was halfway in between. I had studied a little bit of psychodrama, but I had no place to practice it. He said, “Here, practice on these people. How do you feel about it, group?” They said, “Fine. He can’t hurt us.” [Laughter.]

jw: What jumps out at me is your permission to be creative and experiment.

HTS: Right, I mean the man was saying, “I trust you. Go ahead and try it out. If you get in trouble I’ll step in.” So it was a combination of the marathon experience with him and the group work. The encouragement I got in group, I think, did something to me there. All of the psychology that I had been learning, playing in the theater, using dramatically, and trying to represent character; I now had a chance to work with people and to help them. The other members of the group and the feedback were helpful: “Wow!” You know, “Hey, that’s all right.”

jw: It was kind of a validation for something. Looking at the expression on your face, I’d say maybe a validation for something you didn’t realize was there?

HTS: Yes. I didn’t make the connection that I could be in psychology and be a therapist. I thought, “I know a lot about psychology and I’m using it in the theater and in my life.” I figured it was neat, but now I was given this opportunity at trying stuff out and realizing, “I’m actually helping somebody.” What I did is I went back, I was still working with Sophia, and I said, “I’m excited about a new direction.”
JW: So the feeling was excitement and optimism?
HTS: Optimism and a searching for where is the right place. Architecture was interesting and fascinating, engineering was interesting and fascinating; but this was not really the right place for me. It was not a terrific fit. Theater was a fascinating period and I loved it but it wasn't the right place; it didn't use everything properly. When I got one step into psychology I began to feel, "Oh my God, this is going to use it all!" I got very excited about that.

JW: So it all came together?
HTS: Yes. I don't know if I answered your prior question.

JW: Well, I was trying to think: where from here? You are in the group with Joe Potts and seeing Sophia. Then, did you formulate a plan at that point for yourself?

HTS: What happened was, I was getting close to it. I was tempted because I still had one foot in the theater. Then a rather shocking thing happened: Joe Potts died of a heart attack.

JW: How long had you been working with him at that point?

HTS: Maybe as much as a year or longer. I had built a very good relationship with him and he had even introduced me to another man, somebody who had asked him to teach some psychology seminars for business—sort of simplified psychology, sort of like a TA [Transactional analysis] type.10

JW: T-groups?11

HTS: Not a T-group; that is sensitivity training. TA is more like it. Joe said, "I don't have time to do that," so he said, "Get Henry to do it." "But Joe, I don't know anything about it." Joe said, "You are close enough! Do some reading; you can handle yourself in front of a group." He introduced me to this man and I started doing some psychology seminars for business, simplified psychology.

JW: How did that go?

HTS: Very well. I built a wonderful relationship with the man who later became my partner, as we did not only seminars for business, but we did special roundtable seminars for business leaders. He was one of these high-flying entrepreneurs full of principle. But he would take chances and try stuff out and if it didn't work he would try something else. We did something called Executive Round Table. We did this for a couple of years—which was wonderful.

We brought together a group of CEOs of companies and other entrepreneurs once a month for continued education. I would teach them psychology, and he would be involved with a lot of financial and marketing stuff. Then we would have a brain trust of everybody helping each other. It was one hell of a think tank. We spent the whole day together and they loved it. Then he discovered that he was teaching people how
to do well in business and make money and do things beautifully so he decided, “Why don’t I apply these principles myself?” Which he did, and went off in the direction of real estate development because we had also done a seminar for real estate people.

JW: Where did that leave you?

HTS: I was doing this actually as a way of making the transition out of theater into psychology. It allowed me to make a living while I was going to school because I had gone back to school to get my master’s degree at San Francisco State.

JW: So what year, just to get a time frame?

HTS: This was probably the mid-1960s. Well, going back to one thing about Joe’s death. When Joe died I had not yet made the commitment to psychology. His death hit me very hard. I remember just crying my eyes out when I heard the news. But I guess the way I healed myself at that time—from his loss, because that was the second loss of an important man in my life—was, I thought to myself, “I’m going to carry on his work.” And that was it, “I am going to definitely go into the field of psychology. I want to become an Adlerian.” He had taught me some things that I did not want to let fade away and not be used. I personally said, “He has given me something and I want to use it. I want to give it back.” At that point I went back to school. I applied to several schools and I was admitted to do graduate work at San Francisco State. I think what allowed me to do that was the work as an instructor and a consultant with this business organization; because I had flexibility and I could make enough money that I could go to school.

JW: In graduate school, what was your experience there? You were exposed to other psychologies?

HTS: Yes, it was basically pretty good. I got a great deal from my graduate work at San Francisco State. There were some people that I found fascinating and inspiring. Not everybody, but it was enough that it kind of got me launched.

I should especially mention that Lou Falik was very challenging. He certainly was not an Adlerian but he was open to my ideas and encouraged me to be more explicit with them. Ben Ard was quite wonderful. His orientation was based on the work of Albert Ellis. He introduced me to the work of Abraham Maslow, and for that I owe him a great debt. He was also a very inspiring man. Very challenging and also a challenging professor, but I loved it. I absolutely loved it. I had a great time there.

JW: Getting back to your relationship with Sophia. I assume through all of this you were still meeting with Sophia and consulting with her?

HTS: What happened was after I completed my study analysis with her and going back to school I began to see her for supervision. I would discuss
every case with her. I used to have 2-hour sessions with her sometimes because I wanted to go through every nook and cranny of it. That is the way I learned the craft—which was to take the case apart and put it back together with her.

Developing and Teaching the Classical Adlerian Approach

JW: Maybe I'm getting too far ahead, but at what point did you think about teaching Adlerian psychology?

HTS: No, that's fine. It was after quite a bit of work with Sophia. What I did was—for some reason, maybe it was my audiovisual background—I just was sharp enough to audio- or videotape everything.

JW: From the beginning?

HTS: From the beginning and I ended up with, I don't know, 400 or 500 tapes of my work with her, over 1,000—or maybe 1,200—hours of work. Discussing everything, every idea, theory, practice, and what I was determined to do in each case. In fact, she was such an example: what I consider the epitome of an artful therapist. I have seen a lot of people work in different dimensions, but I decided that I have to be like this. Not exactly like her, but if it was possible to do therapy this way, I wanted to do it this way. So I had to learn everything to be able to do that. She kept saying, "Review that theory until you get it at your fingertips; go deeper and deeper." So my book was marked up, it was falling apart, but 22 times through the book you begin to get it after a while.

JW: Is that the Ansbachers' book?14

HTS: The Ansbachers' book—with the cover falling off; and you feel you have to get a new copy of it, but you want to use the old copy because it has all of your marks in it. You kind of reach a point where you have so much information about it and you understood so much about it! But Sophia seemed to do it automatically, intuitively. That was not enough and I said, "No, I have to understand why you did it and how you did it." Essentially, what I would do is go into everything including her technique of therapy and say, "Why do you do this first and this second? What is the structure?" She said, "I don't know, it is automatic." I said, "We have got to figure it out."

She helped me figure this out Socratically.15 In a way, it was like I had to ask her questions. The more questions I asked her the more I knew. Then she would ask me questions until finally I would come up with the conclusion; and she said, "That sounds right to me." I would be asking her the question, but she sort of threw it back. Finally I got this whole thing worked out and I thought, "Wow! Now I understand it." What do you do when you understand it that thoroughly? It is like,
"Maybe I should teach it; after all, I have so many notes." That's what it really amounted to.

Socratic Questioning

JW: You were obviously tremendously impressed by Sophia as a person and also by her technique. What is it about the Socratic dialogue that appealed to you? When did you realize the impact of her Socratic dialogue with you? When did you know what she was doing?

HTS: It probably took me about 30 minutes to realize that here is a way of talking to people that is absolutely fascinating, that is very respectful, that helps you draw out a person's thinking and feeling—but that you can also use to guide them, to know that it is being done to you, you don't object to it. It is like, "I love it! I want to be able to do that, too." But figuring out how to do that was really tough because it looks so easy when it is done. It looks so logical when it is done, but the principles behind it took a long time to kind of figure out. As I discovered, there is virtually nothing written about this of any psychological value. A little bit about using it in the legal profession, a little bit in education, but we had to put it together.

JW: In Adler's books he makes reference at times to questioning and therapy, but he doesn't really expound upon it. Certainly you have expounded upon it tremendously.

HTS: Well, I have taken it in deeply because I find it so valuable. To me it is the most interesting way to engage in a dialogue with somebody, to help them learn, grow, and develop.

JW: I was wondering if you could maybe discuss more about your development of the Socratic method in therapy. Could you expound upon that a little more—from your initial contact with Sophia?

HTS: OK, from the beginning. My initial contact with her was the personal study, the study analysis, the applying what I had learned to myself and my work. Gradually, as I got deeper into it, I wanted to read more and more. I combed through Adler's work and through [Erwin] Wexberg's work. Anything I could get my hands on. What was quite compelling to me at first was this whole idea of the model of the personality and the unity, which I was using in the theater. Eventually I got deeply interested in the Socratic method, which Sophia was using very spontaneously with me. I asked her how she did this. She said she didn't know how she did it—she just did it and it became very automatic to her.

JW: It looked easy?

HTS: It looked very simple and straightforward; there was nothing mystical about it. It seemed almost common sense as to how each question seemed very clear and very appropriate. I thought to myself, "Not many people do this. How do you do it? Are there any principles involved?"
She claimed that this was how Alexander Mueller worked with her.16 That also was part of her European education, academically, that the Socratic method was used pretty liberally. She was using it in a more therapeutic way. I said, “It would be interesting to understand this deeper. Can you tell me more?” She said, “That is for you to figure out.” She said, “I will do it because it comes spontaneously, but,” she said, “maybe together we can figure out what this is.” So it was more experiential at first. I had been taping everything and at that point I started reviewing the tapes and listening to them. I thought there must be some principles that one can derive from this.

At this point I wasn’t yet fully committed to the idea of teaching it—I just wanted to understand it, to learn it for myself. One thing I did—which was initially very helpful—was I went back to the library. This was before I had the capacity to go online myself. They did a computer search of everything that could be found by the local librarian on the Socratic method. With the help of a very good librarian, who shaped the search, we searched education, psychology, law, and philosophy to see if we would find anything that was written about the Socratic method and Socratic questioning. I got back a whole stack of material, which was the citations, the different books and journals that the articles were in. I thought, “Wow, this is fantastic!” So I started spending a lot of time digging into these. I got copies of the articles, looked at the books, and wasn’t able to get all of the books at the main library. I had to go to the San Francisco State library and to the University of California library, and eventually I got as much as I could together. I realized that most of what had been written about the Socratic method had to do with philosophy, going back to the original Socrates and Plato. It had a little bit to do with the training of lawyers—which was a variation of the Socratic method; it is more interrogation and entrapment through questioning. Then a fair amount of the articles were in the area of education. What was called “the Socratic method” in many of the articles was more just questioning. It was a very loose use of the term. So I realized that Sophia had been using an adaptation of the Socratic method—not the original philosophic use—and there were many similarities, but there were also some differences. [A cat walks in, followed soon by a second.] We have visitors . . .

JW: Interested in the Socratic dialogue?

HTS: It doesn’t work with Eddie and Angelo. I can tell you with kitties, a more directive approach seems to work.

JW: I will have to ask you about your relationship with your cats in another interview. [Laughter.] You had mentioned Mueller’s name and that sparked my interest, of course, since I have done some work with you
around some of Mueller's work.¹⁹ You said that Mueller taught Sophia this or used this with her. Did Sophia discuss Mueller's view of doing psychotherapy with a Socratic dialogue? Did she discuss Adler's way of doing psychotherapy? Did he use the Socratic dialogue?

HTS: The way she described it was that each therapist adapted the core theory and philosophy to their own personality, so that Mueller's way of doing psychotherapy was not exactly the same as Adler's, nor was it exactly the same as Sophia's. What was interesting for me was that, having never seen Adler in action, I would get my information secondhand from Sophia. The only people I did see in action were Sophia de Vries, Kurt Adler, and Anthony Bruck.²⁰ They each worked differently, but they had exactly the same core base.

Coming back to your question about how Mueller worked. Mueller was very philosophical in his work, very philosophical; and so he would use a lot of questioning. He also apparently would ask people to read material and then discuss it with him.

JW: So, bibliotherapy and more of an educational approach with clients?

HTS: Not so much educational, but it is more like—I wouldn't say "projective"—but it would stimulate clients to respond to something. On the basis of that proposal, he would find out more about why the clients thought about that, why they felt the way they did, and what the reading meant to them. It was not that he used this with every person but, apparently, it was something that he did with people because it was interesting to him and suitable to them. One thing to remember is that Adler, in many cases—because he traveled a lot—was not always available to do sustained long-term therapy with people. So a lot of his work was more abbreviated; in other words, he would sit down with somebody and get to the point very rapidly.

JW: The original brief therapist—are you implying that?

HTS: Not in the sense of brief therapy today—which works usually on symptoms and behavior—but Adler's brief therapy was a quantum leap in such therapy because it got to the heart of the matter very rapidly. If you consider it, Adler was essentially a therapeutic genius. He could do very quickly what might take us much longer to achieve. Part of it was his character, part of it was his deep insight and his ability to make contact; also was the fact that he wanted to help a lot of people and had contact with a lot of people. So he shaped his technique in part to deal with that. Yet there are other cases where he went on for a long time with people when he had the opportunity for that contact. I would say that probably his work was a mixture of Socratic and directive or didactic—depending upon the person's needs. Sophia was the same way; although she was very Socratic, that was not all that she used.
JW: What else did she do?
HTS: Sometimes she would be very directive with somebody, very directive. I remember her dealing with an abusive parent and she would say to this person, “This is wrong; this is definitely wrong and you must stop doing this.” She did it with an authority that was substantial, not with a severity. There was a kind of adaptability to what was needed. In one case you may need to be an advocate of the child and protect the child rather than just be very diplomatic with the parent at that moment. So the Socratic method doesn’t solve every issue. It is a preferred way of working and very effective.

**Values in Psychotherapy**

JW: Obviously you favor this or it suits you. How do you think this method compares with other methods or other techniques today from other psychologies?
HTS: Yes, well, I am not intimately familiar with all of the techniques and therapies. I will say that my impression is that there are some therapies that are very indulgent with clients.

JW: What do you mean?
HTS: They give the client initially a necessary feeling of acceptance, but then there is no guidance toward what might be, in a sense, a better way. By “better” I mean, in Adlerian psychology it is the psychology of values. We have clearly defined what we say is healthier, or more productive, or more useful for people. When we talk about cooperation and social interest we are not saying that every form of functioning is equally valid. We are not saying that selfishness is as valid as altruism. So what we tend to do is, we will accept a client, but then begin to question the client. Our questioning has a direction to it—and the direction is: “What are the consequences of acting a certain way or feeling and thinking a certain way? Does this really help you? Does it help other people? Is it right? Is it the best way? Is there a better way?” That implies values. So there are some therapies that do not do this. In one respect, I think, they miss a great opportunity.

JW: You are really talking about the philosophical side of Adlerian psychology. I think I remember Sophia saying once that there is the educational, psychotherapeutic, and philosophical aspect to Adlerian psychology. One of the areas I wanted you to talk about was the philosophical side of Adlerian psychology. How this has influenced your own life and your work? Could you address that?
HTS: I remember directing Jean-Paul Sartre’s No Exit and reading deeply into existentialism and how that might be evident in the play. So philosophy was sort of somewhere, perhaps in the background, in my life but it wasn’t until I discovered Adler that I realized that philosophy and
psychology were so intimately mixed together. I began to realize that here was what I considered a living philosophy—or a philosophy to live by—which wasn't something you took just on basic faith; it was very logical. Also it had the right feeling to it, it was inspirational. I could not argue against it once I understood it.

Then Sophia helped me realize that psychology and psychotherapy was not just relieving symptoms. It was not just changing behavior, but that one could go much deeper than that—and that one could actually change one's whole outlook on life and the meaning of life. Indeed, for in-depth psychotherapy one really had to do that. That really led to my eventually deciding to become a therapist. What I had to do personally, in order to be an Adlerian or a Classical Adlerian psychotherapist, was that I really had to bring my philosophic views to some degree in parallel with Adler.

**Therapist Congruence with Adler’s Theory**

**JW:** Maybe you could address that. What was that like? Was that difficult; and were you already on track? Sometimes I think that people who are interested in Adlerian psychology, already in some ways, are drawn to those values in Adlerian psychology.

**HTS:** Many are and that is very good and it is very positive, but I do recall in my own case—although I was initially drawn to Adler's ideas I was not fully aware of the contradictions within myself; between what I wanted to believe in and how I was actually behaving. That took a dialogue and took another person who could see into me and point out—in a friendly way—what I was doing, what I thought I was doing, what that really meant, what I wished I would be or wished I could do, and what I might have been doing.

That isn't always comfortable, but it was necessary for me to gain a sense of congruence so that what I was saying really was reflecting what I was doing. I know there are some therapists, even Adlerian therapists, who are very bright, who are very experienced, but if—and I'm seeing this at times to my dismay in terms of demonstrating work—their character does not reflect the philosophy that they are talking about, then they have not done their homework. They haven't conquered their own life styles, as it were. I think to myself that any sharp student will certainly notice this and question it. However, an insecure client might not.

**JW:** Is there something you pick up in a person's attitude? I'm sure you have to listen to them in depth. When you talk about Adlerians who you don't feel have really worked on themselves, how does this manifest itself?

**HTS:** Good question. Sophia used to say to me, “When you are doing therapy, the minute you sit down with a client you have to empty yourself, you have to let go of yourself completely.” At first I was not quite clear
what that meant, but it also means that one has to have the ability to let go of oneself. There are some life styles that do not permit this. The person holds on to himself or herself; therapists too often draw attention to themselves, they want to dominate, they want to show how wonderful they are or they work out something of their own, but they do not serve the client. The ability to let go of oneself completely in therapy, and serve the needs of the client, requires that one has to know what would work against being in touch with the client.

**JW:** In my thinking, in some ways, what you might be saying is that a therapist has to get past a point where there is countertransference.

**HTS:** We could use that term, yes; but I think it is more than that. Therapists might be in the situation where the work that they are doing is for their own personal benefit rather than for the benefit of the client.

**JW:** To have the answers or to be superior in some way to the client.

**HTS:** Perhaps, or to try and work out their own issues through the client. I think that would be a big mistake. I think it is risky in a sense for a therapist who likes being in the spotlight.

**Training Analysis**

**JW:** That is a term you have often used.

**HTS:** Yes, because I have seen this particularly in demonstrations and conventions where it is very apparent that the therapists are feeding their own need for showing what wizards they are, or amusing the audience, or drawing attention to themselves. They are not really fulfilling the needs of the client at the moment. I think it is unfortunate, but I think it is fairly common; because if the person who trains you doesn’t overcome their own life-style issues; if they simply say, “You have to be aware of it and that is enough; just keep it under control”; this sets an example for the students who think, “I don’t have to go any further.”

**JW:** This is one thing, in my time that I have spent with you, which you have always emphasized, that Sophia did personal study analysis and that has been a crucial part of the training that you do. Eventually somebody who is interested in Adlerian psychology really has to do a study analysis. Could you talk about your experience in training a therapist and a little bit about study analysis?

**HTS:** You know, it is interesting. Anthony Bruck had a very good comment about this. He said, “Adlerian psychology is different from some other therapeutic approaches in that in some therapies you can go into training and come out exactly the same person when you are done. What you have gained is a body of knowledge, a series of techniques, and certain skill, but you are the same person. That is not true in Classical Adlerian training because it has, at best, a deep effect upon the trainee.”
One could almost say that the objective in Adlerian training is to show a person how far a person can go in therapy, to show the whole journey as it were. Now, the clinician has to do this even if the client does not want to go all the way. You have to at least make it known that it is possible.

You could say none of us are saints; but we have to have the acknowledgment that, indeed, it is possible to get somewhere—even if we choose not to do it, we have to take responsibility for that; then not inhibit our clients from doing it. We have to be able and willing to facilitate another person doing this. But, you see, if people are in a state of a sort of denial, they say, “It can’t be done. I don’t have to do it. So why should I even spend time doing it with somebody else?” Then, this makes them feel more comfortable; they are experiencing something like a good conscience.

**JW:** What do you sense would be a reason for somebody maintaining denial or not moving ahead?

**HTS:** Somebody who is maintaining denial or not moving ahead provides “the self” a sense of fear and insecurity, a fear of letting go of something. Many people hold on to limitations because they are afraid. If they were to live at a certain level of functioning, they couldn’t keep it up or they sense they wouldn’t be able to do it; they would feel humiliated and it would be a crushing blow to their knowledge of themselves.

**JW:** So they hold on to that life-style dynamic?

**HTS:** To add limitations, and it is as if they could imagine that “If only I didn’t have certain things—I would go further.” But they don’t risk going further. It is partly a question of courage—that also depends on how much uncertainty a person can risk. In a sense, particularly as you take on certain projects, there are some projects where you may think, “Wow! This is something! Can I handle it if I get stuck? Can I handle it if I don’t go anywhere? What if I can’t handle it? I will learn how to handle it or somebody else will help me handle it.” Then you keep going.

**JW:** It is interesting you use the word uncertainty. Somewhere I read that Adler defined maturity as “developing a tolerance for uncertainty.” So you are really talking about a maturity process in some ways?

**HTS:** It is a maturity process, but let’s take it even further. This is sort of adding together what Sophia had told me and what I read from [Abraham] Maslow. It is not just tolerating uncertainty—it is preferring it.

**JW:** Preferring it?

**HTS:** Preferring it, yes. You look surprised. Hey, that was my first reaction. I remember talking to Sophia about it. I said, “Preferring uncertainty?” She said, “Yes, you can learn to love it.”

**JW:** Preferring the challenge?
HTS: The challenge is, in a sense, not wanting to have “a sure thing.” We constantly deal with people who want guarantees of success. What a boring way to live! But to take on the right challenge with a degree of uncertainty. This does not mean to take on something foolish, totally beyond you, but just the right degree of uncertainty that adds a sort of a flavoring to it. That is what is important.

JW: My next question is similar—in the same vein this requires a lot of studying. What is the difference between the students who put in the time, the work, and the reading, and those students who don’t? Could you comment on that? I am interested in your view of the kind of people, therapists, who are drawn to study with you—and perhaps those who aren’t. What has been your experience about those who are drawn to Adlerian psychology and the in-depth training that you do? Who drops out?

HTS: Well, the people who get attracted to Classical Adlerian training—which is kind of different—are somewhat of a distinctive breed, I would say.

First of all, I will accept anybody who is interested. So, I don’t divide people up. But, fairly early in the work, it becomes evident that there are some people who are willing to get into a subject very deeply and others who are in a big hurry and want a kind of a fast, superficial outcome. What they are doing is they are collecting a little bit of Adler, and a little bit of Freud, and a little bit of Jung—a little bit of this and a little bit of that. They may be doing hypnotherapy and this thing, and they have got it all together and they will give me maybe a couple of months. They will just add it to their collection. These people don’t last very long in our work, in our training. Largely because, what I expect of them is to get into the depth of Adler and study Adler and understand and digest Adler. Prove that they understand it. It is not just remembering it.

JW: So there is no quick easy path to mastering it?

HTS: Not that I know of, no. I think what is unfortunate is that there have been some forms of Adlerian training which have suggested that it can be done faster and easier. But that, to me, does not reflect training a psychotherapist. It may be training a form of lighter counseling, or maybe parent education, but the heart of psychotherapy is an art form. It is a combination of science and art. What it reminds me of is some of the other disciplines. For example, if one wants to become a very fine concert pianist, what do you think, is 6 months or a year enough?

JW: I would like to see that.

HTS: You wish. Take studying some of the disciplines like the martial arts—or like tai chi. It is fairly accepted in that field that you may start and study but you begin to learn something in a couple of years. After maybe about 5 years you are getting to be fairly good and after about 10 years
you might become quite accomplished. That is not unusual—and in fact I think it was in Outliers that Malcolm Gladwell [2011] showed that in any field it takes easily about 10 years of intensive study before you can even make a significant contribution or you have an in-depth understanding. Why should psychotherapy be any less than that? Look at what we are working with; we are working with people’s lives. Our model is not a demanding model; it is an invitational model. If you want to master this, and you want to learn the art of it, then we will teach it to you, but you have to do your work.

The Creative Process

JW: Perhaps you could talk more about the creative process because you did make reference to Sophia, Anthony, and Adler all doing therapy differently.

HTS: Somewhat differently.

JW: I remember reading—I think it was in Ellenberger’s [1970] book—The Discovery of the Unconscious, where he made a comment about perhaps no two Adlerians doing therapy the same way.

HTS: It goes even further than that, Jim. I remember one summer intensive [training] there was a woman from southern California who came up and I was demonstrating the technique of therapy. I had three volunteers and I did it at the end. She asked, “Why do you work with each person differently?” I asked, “What do you mean?” She said, “I was trained to do it this way.” She was trained to use a certain technique and use that technique each time. I said, “Because you invent a therapy for each client.”

It is not just that the therapist is different—Sophia, Anthony, and Mueller—but it is like each person is different. Now this is a creative demand and it is also a creative opportunity. How do you match this, the personality of the therapist with the needs of the client? That keeps it interesting; it doesn’t get stale. I can’t imagine a therapist doing a technique the same way each time every year with each person.

JW: So you are really defining psychotherapy, at least Adlerian psychotherapy almost as “pure art.” Maybe “pure” is too strong?

HTS: It is not too strong for me. There is an art to it. There is a creativity to it, which is why, in order to teach this, I have had to delve into the issue of the creative process to try and give it some kind of vocabulary. It is like when I am talking to a therapist about a case—or even thinking about a case that requires creative thinking—what I try to do is help them see that the creative process that an artist goes through, or a scientist goes through, is not much different than the creative process that a therapist has to go through.
JW: Could you talk about that a little: What is the creative process? What comes to mind? I know you have said that, really, to be creative and do therapy you have to do your homework.

HTS: Yes.

JW: Do you just go in fully with a client and then forget about them until the next session? What do you do?

HTS: Number 1: Before you can fully engage with the client, hopefully you have mastered your theory; it has become second nature to you. So your theory is at your fingertips and your technique is at your fingertips. Then, when you sit down with a client you forget all of that and you, in a sense, “respond.” All of this information comes to you when you need it.

Knowing what to do requires a certain amount of analysis and planning. So, when you sit down with a client in the early stages you are making a connection; you are getting information. You have no idea what it means yet, how to use it, but you sort of hungrily gather it in and make a lot of notes. In many cases I give people a questionnaire to fill out so I get this information. Then I sit down and the creative process of, I would call it, “case analysis” begins. Because there is also a creative process of “treatment planning” and then of “treatment”; but the creative process of case analysis means that one has to have enough information at one’s fingertips and to saturate yourself with it in order to have, in a sense, the raw material. Now in order to do that, very frequently, one has to have a certain structure.

JW: The structure being the theory?

HTS: Yes, the theory; but also your technique of working with the case material. So what I will say to somebody is, “Gather as much information as possible, but then once you have gathered information structurally you have to organize it.” This is one reason why I use computers now to do this. It is like taking information that may be about, let’s say, the person as a child and gathering it all together, and information about their siblings and gathering it together. People don’t give you that information in discrete entities. They give it to you here and there and you have to gather it together—for example, information about their earliest memories. So once you have that fundamental information, and you organize it, it’s manageable. It’s like putting piles on your desk, as it were. That is only the beginning.

The next stage is that of saturation. You kind of have to dig into this stuff and, in a sense, get into it so that you not only understand it and think it—you have to feel it, too. It is like a hot tub of information. You come right on up to your nose and you kind of have to have a feeling that you are really saturated before you can make any conclusions.
Iw: Just to perhaps give the reader of this interview an idea, how much time do you spend “saturating” at first? Say, for each hour of therapy in the first month or two or three of the therapeutic relationship, how much time do you spend?

Hts: I can’t tell you exactly in a total number, but I can tell you I put in as much time as it takes to come to my conclusion. So I have spent a lot of my so-called free time, especially in the early stages of a case, working on that case. A person has come in and maybe spent 2 hours of interview time and filled out a questionnaire. This does not sound very efficient in terms of profit making or time efficiency, but I might spend easily that much time, or more if I can, working on that case. Some cases don’t require it—they are very clear right in front of you. I am talking about a complex case, all right? I mean, in some cases where it is almost evident: right in front of you, so you don’t do that much work. This is more of an example of a tough case that you can’t quite get your hands on—or it looks like it will be a fascinating case.

The image that I have here is of Sherlock Holmes. If you ever have watched Jeremy Brett play Sherlock Holmes, you know what I mean. He sits there and he waits for a great case to come and then he gets mobilized and he can’t wait to jump into it. He drops everything and he goes for it—and Doctor Watson comes trailing behind.

It’s like, “Here, wow, a new case!” You get deep into it and there is a mystery here that needs to be solved. So it might take many hours, but you want to know, “Why would a person keep doing this again and again?” It is fascinating, absolutely fascinating. I would rather do that than read certain books or do a crossword puzzle or watch television. I do, by the way, stop my work and do these other things. [Laughter.]

But, it’s like, once you get into it and you realize that there are these somewhat predictable stages of getting that information together, organizing it, saturating yourself, and then you let go of it. You let it incubate and you go and you do other things. I remember, at times, things would come to me when I was working on my motorcycle. Doing purely mechanic things or changing the oil is when understanding would come to me.

Iw: The connections would be made.

Hts: Connections would be made. I would just let it incubate. I know that if I am very relaxed these things will come to me.

Iw: I am listening and the energy and enthusiasm you are talking about is a totally involved process. You involve yourself.

Hts: I think that is a good point, because some people may think that case analysis is largely an analytic process—and they are partly right. But one of the things that I discovered—and this was very difficult to get through
this point—I was watching Sophia go through it and I couldn't quite figure it out until, finally, it came to me. That is, there is an analytic part of it where you have a lot of information. Then, at some point, comes this intuitive leap. You think, "How do you get to the intuitive leap, from all of this analysis?" I realized it had to do with feeling, which is not only do you kind of get in and saturate yourself with information—then you have to permit yourself to go into a feeling mode, which is not analytical. This is based on the premise—I think it was Paul LaViolette and William Gray were the authors who claimed—that feelings organized thinking.²¹ Interesting concept and it seems to have been a kind of "point of leverage" as to get from the analytic to the intuitive side of case analysis.

That is—and I sometimes find this if I am sort of stuck—if we are doing, let's say, the Group Case Seminars and there is a lot of information coming out.²² I think, "Wow—this is a tough case." We are just kicking it around and guessing, trying to figure out what is going on. I think to myself, "I don't quite understand it"; and I can't analyze it. What I do is, I back up and I just go into—it looks like a trance, but I'm not in one. I'm just trying to absorb a lot of feeling from that case, just at a feeling level. I trust that the absorption of feeling will organize the material that is already known, partly analyzed, but that you can't come to a logical conclusion with. The reason that you can't, I think, is that you can't use "common sense" to bridge a client's "private logic." You kind of have to run parallel into their private logic—and their private logic is largely, in a sense, dictated by forms of intoxicated thinking.

**jw:** Their life style and their goals.

**HTS:** Their life style, their goals, and their unusual way of thinking as a way of fooling oneself—or feeling as a way of fooling oneself and intoxicating oneself. If the therapist doesn't get a sense of the client's private logic, he can't quite penetrate this self-serving form of thinking and feeling because it defies common sense and normal logic.

**jw:** This has been a great survey of the road you have reestablished and documented by working personally with some of the pioneers of Classical Adlerian Depth Psychotherapy. But then I think of you as a teacher. You've been involved in theater in the past and you're a very verbal, articulate individual; and there's your cerebral side. I mean, you work for verbal clarity and I think you are very successful at that. When you think of yourself as a teacher, how has that developed with you? What was the foundation?

**HTS:** I think the foundation, Jim, was that in order for me to understand something, it sometimes is better for me to be in a dialogue than to just sit down and think or write about it. I remember Sophia saying, "Adler was at his best when people asked him questions." Sophia, too, was at her
best when people asked her questions. I mean, that’s what happened when I invited her to join in the summer workshops that we did. I had people coming in from all over the place and she would come in on the last day and all she would do was answer questions. But it was great! She made an imprint. It was kind of like, “If you want to learn more, then get some students in front of you and have them ask you questions.” That was one part of my understanding of teaching.

The other part was being absolutely obsessed with the Socratic method. I thought this was the greatest thing I’d ever heard about. Then I also realized that there was something else that helped bring life to that. For me it was my experience in the theater—so I thought of role-play, of simulating, dramatizing something. I remember when I was working and doing some workshops for parents, every once in a while, what I’d do—rather than just describe it—is I would do it. “Mommy! I want to...” and it added a little bit of reality to the situation. Adler probably never did this, as he never needed to.

But I felt comfortable using my study skills, my analytic skills, even some of the dramatic skills for the purpose of presenting material. But I knew the juicy part would always be, at some point, the questions that would come. So, I thought, “OK, I’ll set the groundwork for that.” And I think over a period of time, the teaching of it really helped me deepen my knowledge of it. It had to. When I had to teach a particular subject, I had to go in there and go back over the material again and again and then I would play with it and I would create diagrams and mind maps and I would realize, “I can create a thinking structure that goes deeper and deeper.” Boy, this is an endless kind of project.

And so it was a combination of learning from Sophia, being in practice, having to be at the front lines every day, working with difficult clients and then teaching it; these were, I guess you could say, all cross-referenced with each other. This was a great combination.

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**Extending Technologies and Techniques in Congruence with Adler**

**JW:** We’ve been speaking of your development of the training institute. I think one of the tools you used effectively to expand your reach was the Internet. Do I remember correctly that you received some kind of award for the original website you created?

**Classical Adlerian Website (www.adlerian.us)**

**HTS:** This was some time ago. In the very beginnings of these, rather than various psychology websites, there was a general psychology site. I don’t remember who started it, but in order to promote it, he offered
awards of recognition for sites of excellence and so he recognized our site as being an important one. I think probably for maybe 6 months or so, I had a little icon at the bottom of the site indicating that it had been recognized.

In the very beginning, there was this issue of trying to find out what would work to get people to come to a website. I mean, it was one thing to put one up; but when I discovered what might be possible with the Internet, it became a judgment call as to what do I do with that capability. So surely a website was one idea.

But then I realized that there were a bunch of other ways of connecting with people via the Internet—not just the website. There were newsgroups, which are not that popular anymore. There was this bunch of discussion forums and other sites and what I realized was that putting up good information was a fair beginning, but then you had to reach out and connect and get people to find out that the information was there. I think one of the first things was being invited to be a moderator at the Behavior Online site.23

JW: Right. I remember that. Are you still involved in that?

HTS: Yes, moderately. But these things kind of run like fads. At one time, it was very heavy, but now it’s very, very light and, you know, I go there once in a while and pop something in. But there’s a kind of an issue on the Internet of “the latest thing” everybody runs towards and they forget the previous thing. So I have the website and I kept adding material every week. I’d add another little article or another graphic or something like that and I just kept kind of plugging stuff in. Then I ran into an unexpected problem which was a couple of years ago: CompuServe that hosted my original site simply ran out of business and there was no way to transfer the site over to another location, so I lost a high percentage of my Google Ranking because initially...

JW: Your high percentage of your what?

HTS: Google Ranking. In other words, when you run a search on Google, in a sense, how high you come up in the search depends on how you rank. Part of it used to be keywords, but then I found out that the way they really ranked it was according to how many people linked to your site.

I lost some of those old links. So, at one time, I went in and did a check because I found out how to do this. I found out that almost 300 sites had linked to my original CompuServe site, but there was no way I could get most of them to change it to the new site. So then I tried different things. I went from CompuServe to AT&T and then you know what happened? In 6 months after that AT&T dropped it! I was freaking out. I figured, "I can’t go through this anymore!" so I went to an independent site and purchased a URL name. That way, if anything
happened, I could always transfer it. I probably should have done that originally, but I didn't have enough knowledge about that to realize it would be a problem.

So anyway, now www.adlerian.us is my official site and that's been pretty firm, reliable. What I also had to do was to find other ways of getting people interested. I went on Yahoo and I started a couple of discussion forums: an Adlerian discussion forum, a birth-order forum, a Maslow forum, one on Classical Adlerian psychology and child guidance. The only two that really took off [were] the Classical Adlerian forum, which had a fair number of people visit, and the birth-order one. That was kind of interesting, but not terribly significant. It was a lot of work for a little bit of result.

Today, it's a highly competitive environment, so what I did was subscribe to Google Analytics. This tells me how many people come and visit the site and where they're coming from, what countries they're coming from, what keywords they were using on their searches. This was really very interesting. The site got about 1,200 to 1,500 hits per month.

JW: It also sounds very involved, as I'm listening to you. You know, Adler spoke a lot to groups—reaching out as well. And this approach sounded like an aspect of his psychotherapy work. Adler had his books published to try and get his word out. To me, it is one thing to have a viable theoretical frame of reference, a way of doing therapy—yet it is another to let people know that you're there and what you can do and to frame that in a way that engages them.

HTS: It's a good point. I realized early on that I needed multiple forms of influence. For example I would still go and present at some of the conferences, but I didn't feel like traveling a lot, so I did more of the local conferences. I mean, early in the game I would present at other conferences like the TA [transactional analysis] conference and other things like that.24

Print Media

HTS: What I realize now is that putting information in print is very important. So, first came The Collected Clinical Works of Alfred Adler [the CCWAA] and then a couple of volumes of other Classical Adlerians. I've addressed developing the Collected Works elsewhere and the fuller story really needs another telling.25 Now I'm occupied with my own work. My first book was published in September 2013; it is on the technique of treatment from the Classical Adlerian perspective.26

JW: Now, you'd been working on that quite a while and I assume that Laurie assisted. She's a part of this, right?
HTS: Oh, yes, a big part of it. She is my editor, proofreader. You know, if it makes sense to her, it's understandable and I know I'm on the right track. We did about four drafts to get it ready. We'd print it out. Laurie would go through it. We'd talk about it, and then we'd print it out again; each time finding a little more we should add. There is a series planned here so Volume 1 is on the technique of treatment.

JW: Have you gone to a publisher or are you doing this yourself?

HTS: Everything to date has been self-publishing. I don't want anybody messing around telling me how to do it. I'll take responsibility for it. I mean, in other words, if we don't make a nickel on it, I'd still do it my way. So, that's Volume 1. Volume 2 deals with case analysis, life-style analysis, and interpretation. And then, downstream, there'll be a Volume 3 on couple treatment or combining couple treatment and family treatment.

And I have still another volume planned, which—and I'm not sure which way to go with this—one which is simply to illustrate techniques such as the Socratic method, eidetic imagery, role-playing, and the simulation of the 12 stages of treatment. I think it would be quite valuable even though I offer a segment of the Socratic method in Volume 1. This includes very thorough process notes, and Laurie felt that the process notes were the golden part of it. So this other volume will have a whole bunch of illustrations, and it might be too much to include process notes as well—so I'm not sure I'm going to go in that direction. But at any rate, at the moment, one book is published. The second book will be out by the end of 2014.

JW: The question comes to mind, in terms of the art of doing therapy, in Volume 1, do you discuss the Group Case Seminar? Is that not a part of the focus of the book? This part of the doing of therapy and the process notes and the consultation is very important.

HTS: Our consultations are part of the CADP training. The book is a description of what we do, but it's not really intended to train people. It makes reference to the fact that—if you really want to know more about it—you've got to go and inquire or apply for the training. This first book really—assuming somebody may not know about Adler—gives an overview of all of the constructs and then it points to the CCWAA and also to the Ansbachers' books for more information.

JW: Have you looked at your book as a filling in a gap that really the early Adlerians left? My understanding is they really didn't talk much about the actual conduct of doing therapy.

HTS: Absolutely.

JW: And so this book is in the direction of filling in that gap?

HTS: You're right. The lack of instruction on how to do therapy is a huge, gaping hole.

JW: Can you say more?
HTS: Some writers believed and still believe that it’s sufficient to “collect a life style” in a systematic, identical way with each client, following certain prescribed steps, in about six sessions. Then the therapist gives the client a summary of his basic mistakes; and in many cases, further therapy isn’t even required. I found that astounding, but that’s a commonly accepted idea. But you’re right. Adler didn’t write that much about the technique or treatment nor did anybody else in the Adlerian movement. Sophia didn’t write about it either. What I did was I simply observed and experienced what she was doing and then tried to describe it and also try to figure out a way to explain it.

The Classical Adlerian Depth Psychotherapy approach fills what amounts to a huge gap, and it’s understandable to me that other professionals—when they’re looking at Adler—don’t really have a chance to see much about how Adlerian therapy is done. I mean, we have available a tremendous amount about his philosophy and his theory and his case understanding, but not about how he did it. So I felt that showing how Sophia and others did this, that would fill the gap.

Applying Individual Creativity

jw: Again, Ellenberger’s [1970] *The Discovery of the Unconscious* emphasizes that therapy is a system in which one creative person, the therapist, connects with another creative individual, the client who has created his or her own life style and approach to the world.

HTS: I think this is an important consideration. As we approach doing therapy—which certainly brings our own personality, our own experience—our own skills come forward. As my studies with Sophia showed, it is about using one’s full capacities. I mean, especially her masterful views of Socratic method. It is unequaled—unequaled to anybody I’ve ever been with. Yet if you study what Anthony did, Anthony worked differently and was very creative using Adler’s constructs. However, he did it in his kind of own way—same thing with Kurt Adler. Kurt Adler’s way of working was different.

In doing creative therapy, one’s personality is used to the utmost. So, I thought, “Well, what should I do to teach this?” Well, what you do is you find some approach or some person that appeals to you and you learn how to do that, and then when you get deep enough into it, then you begin adding your own understandings or making your own choices—but at least you had a place to start. That’s how I felt with Sophia. I mean, she never used eidetic imagery in her work, but she said that Mueller thought that imagery was very important. Still, there wasn’t much written about it so I felt, “Hmm, OK, I’m going to add that in.” Sophia did group work, but she never did marathon group work.

jw: Right. You got that from Joe Potts.
I got that from Joe Potts but, while Sophia said Joe Potts was not Adlerian, she always said, "The man is wonderful. So why not learn from anybody who does some really good work?" And then came the question for me, "Is something adaptable or congruent with Adler?" and then she helped me evaluate that and to realize what was and what wasn't. What this does is it leaves a very big open, creative opportunity for a therapist. Still, you're not going to get very far if you don't believe and accept and master the *theory*, and that's what, I think, is not very well understood among Adlerian therapists.

**JW:** Right. How to, as Sophia would say, "put the theory at your fingertips."

**HTS:** At your fingertips. It takes a long time and it doesn't just happen because you get older. It happens because you keep working on it.

**JW:** Right, right, right, and I think there's no escaping from putting in the time and the study and the discussion to one degree or another until it becomes a part of you. I guess you never really get enough of it.

**HTS:** Exactly right. And this, I think is the part that maybe some people don't understand. They study what may be interesting, but not very deeply. With Adler, you can keep going deeper and deeper and it never runs dry.

**JW:** I think the people I've always respected, no matter what their theory, are still involved in study and growing and recognizing that you can't really know enough.

**HTS:** But the other thing, I think, what is important is taking on again and again and again the understanding of new cases. You really have to tackle tough cases even if, for example, they're not yours. This is why group case study is so fascinating: it's a workout! Every case is unique. There are some things you've never heard of before. We discover them and then what do you do with that? Well, we've got to invent stuff. We can't just use "canned" techniques. That challenge of applying your knowledge and your ability to case after case, including those of others, is what keeps you sharp.

Mastering the totality of Adler requires a constant interplay between digging deeper into the theory and tackling a wider range of difficult cases. This bridge between theory and practice provides endless proof of Adler's usefulness. Every time we get to the heart of a case, we prove Adler works.

Now, to prove that again and again and again is quite fascinating. You know, the toughest thing—and we know this in our own experience—the toughest thing in trying to uncover a case is distilling all an individual's information down and trying to nail that fictional final goal and maybe the counter-fiction. This is not easy, and we don't always get it right away, but we keep looking for it. When we find it, it all comes to life. I think there are some people who just think this is too much work for them.
Group Case Seminars and the Psychological Gesture

**jw:** Well, I think it is difficult. I mean, you're saying work and work and work until we finally get it and, well, I don't always get it. And I think that, for me, the dialogue with the people in the Group Case Seminar really helps me understand more clearly. It's sometimes easier to work on someone else's cases. I don't know if it is actually easier, but it becomes clearer for me when I have some distance by thinking about somebody else's case rather than my own.

**HTS:** I agree with you. There is a kind of emotional distance, whatever; but you can see the totality a little bit better. The other thing is, I really trust in doing casework with different modes of approaching it. For example, one mode is if you sit down by yourself and you start looking at the information. You think, “Well, what does all this mean?” But then, I love making genograms, diagrams of it, color coding it—even doing an Ecco spreadsheet, as we discussed earlier. That's another mode of how I sort of kick it around. Even with all of that information, though, I find that I still get something different and even richer when I talk about it with somebody. So when I'm doing a case consult with somebody and it's talking back and forth, it's quite different than reading that case.

When I hear the clinician talking about something, bells go off. When we're talking about it in the group and somebody says this and somebody says that, there's something vital and alive about having the interaction. You see, one thing is when you're reading a case and say, maybe “OK, I'll finish it tomorrow.” But when you're having a discussion, you've got to do something right now. You've got to guess right now. You've got to say yes or no right now. So there's something about these different modes of dealing with a case: working on it by yourself, making a diagram, highlighting it, making notes, thinking about it, but then talking about it.

Michael Chekov had quite innovative ideas about helping an actor portray a character. He came up with some physical exercises to help you portray a psychological gesture. These were really quite fascinating and very useful for the actor and I thought, “This guy has got really fascinating stuff.” I started taking that idea and turning it around thinking, “Would some of these ideas be useful for the therapist?” By that I mean, we can think about a case, analyze it, and get feelings about it. I remember talking with one of my students, a psychiatrist. Many of his impressions about what's going on with his clients are from his feelings about something, and that leads him to the insight.

But then I thought, “There's the feeling in life: how you feel about the case, how the client feels when you're empathizing with them.” But there's also the somatic part, the physical part. Now, I think there are even
certain exercises, techniques in the psychoanalytic field about mirroring the client's movements and postures, sort of like imitating them. This is not a subjective "transference thing." It's kind of like—it's translating what we know about a client. We can translate it into a DSM [Diagnostic and Statistical Manual] category. We can translate it into a fictional final goal and an inferiority feeling, counter-fiction, antithetical scheme; but one other way to translate it is to translate what the client is doing into a physical form, which is a posture and gesture. It's kind of dancelike in a way.

I have started exploring this idea—it is all poetic and imaginative; not real. But, what I'm saying is, if I'm thinking about this particular client and we're trying to get our minds around the early recollections, I think to myself, "If I want to poetically encapsulate this person's character—if I were a sculptor or if I were the theater director or dance director—I would say, 'What would be the posture and gesture of this person that would symbolize what they're doing?'") Dance people do this all the time. And it became fascinating because what we're saying essentially is, "You can try to empathize with a person in this manner, also." For example, let's say you're working with a morbidly obese person, 300 pounds or more, and you might think, "Well, what does it feel like?" And it might help to imagine a 300-pound body that you got into like a suit. So that you would use your imagination, get inside of it, sit beside him, just looking at this person and empathizing with him, what would it be like to have his body? This is not for everybody, of course, but I thought to myself under certain circumstances, there's no substitute for this kind of imaginative identification.

jw: It might not be exactly the same thing, but what I've learned to do is to reflect on a case by doing visualization; visualizing me being that youngest child, for example, or an angry parent or an overindulgent mother. What goal might I choose to deal with my distress, with my inferiority feeling?

hts: That's a great idea. It gets right down to the prototype of what you imagine him as a child; in his situation, it's much more dramatic, more intense.

jw: But you're really talking about something different. You're talking about translating that kind of movement—not just the visualization, but actually somehow acting it out.

hts: That's right, exactly. Visualizing it works for some people, as if I can see it in my mind's eye. But I want to get inside of it; put it on; move around with it. For example, there's an imaginary body, but there's also this idea of what Chekhov would call the psychological gesture. He said, for example, if you stand up very straight and very rigidly and you're sort of
in a military posture, it gives you a certain feeling. But now, if you were to crouch down on the floor in a corner and put your hands over your head, it would give you a certain other feeling. The thing about this is you may have somebody in front of you and they don’t get in these postures and positions. They may look very sophisticated, but sometimes in some cases, it might help to think, “What is the symbolic internal posture and gesture that this person, in a sense, is representing?”

I mean, think of somebody who is very aggressively depreciating and accusing. I have one client that I’m thinking about right now who blames everybody for everything. And I think to myself, “Well, translated into a gesture and posture, I’d stand up, take my finger and point it to somebody and scowl.” It’s almost operatic in a sense. But for some people in some cases, it helps the therapist imagine something. Even Adler frequently used terms to describe the clients—like “the entitled princess” or “the beggar” with his hands out in supplication. These are interesting, poetic metaphors. What I’m saying is, it’s helpful as we analyze the case to take a little side trip into poetry.

JW: It’s the power of an image.

HTS: Artists, sometimes poets and writers, have greater insight into people than some psychologists—but what is it that they use? They use descriptions, but they sometimes use poetry and images. There’s power behind it. There’s feeling behind it so my thought here is, “Give the therapists tools that might be appealing to them as clinicians.” Some people will say, “Well, I don’t want to do this.” Fine, but what if somebody is saying, “Oh, might this have worked because I’m more tuned in to an expressive movement?”

If you really want to penetrate the character of this person, here are 50 different tools that you might use. You pick the ones that are your favorites, and keep using your favorites. But if you get stuck, why don’t you try this other one? To me, the very creative part of this work is that here you have this kind of teleological theory, but in order to use it, you sometimes have to use images and poetry. It doesn’t contradict the theory. In fact, it sometimes gets closer to it.

Optimal Living

JW: You’re really talking about the different techniques that can be used in Adlerian ways. You’re operating from the same principles of Adlerian psychology, but I think people have made reference to Adlerians actually being eclectic. Maybe they are in terms of technique, but it’s the principal theory that one holds on to.

HTS: Right, because if you’re only infatuated with techniques and you don’t have the insight, you really can’t help the person change. Other
Theoricians give people a nice experience; their clients feel a little better. They feel relieved and experience a little bit of catharsis. But when you talk about the real power of helping people with depth psychotherapy—actually helping them change by resolving their issues—it cannot happen without that insight. This is where I think Adler is so different than anybody else. He gives us a reference point that nobody else even comes close to: that fictional final goal. What he says is really clear. He says, “You can help a person—you can help improve—but if you really want to go all the way, what you have to do is you have got to dissolve that goal.”

Now, does it happen very often? No. Does everybody want it? No. But it is possible and that’s why he said it; and we have to take it seriously. Now, what this could become is an important factor because we might look at somebody and say, “Here’s where they are. I accept them where they are and this is what they’re doing. I understand what they’re doing, even why they’re doing it.” Good enough, that’s a beginning. But then comes that vision of looking at this person and thinking, “What could this person become?” Now, they don’t see it yet. They don’t feel it yet. They don’t recognize it yet. I mean, this is what good teachers do. They lead you out of ignorance into some kind of understanding, knowledge, but in therapy, it’s like looking at somebody and honestly having not just a model for understanding them, but having a model for what a human being, this human being, might or could become. That’s the inspiration, which is certainly missing.

JW: That’s accomplished by connectedness and insight, persuasion, doing differently; it can’t be coerced.

HTS: Right, Jim, but you also have to have the philosophic belief and the imagination to say that I can really grow. Making this very concrete, I remember Joe Potts doing this and it blew my mind. Joe had a profound spirituality. He was a profoundly spiritual man, but he had this—just like Sophia—he had this incredible level of positive energy in him.

But sometimes, he would say something—and I watched him do this in group and in a marathon—he would look at somebody and not just look at them, but look into them. And he would say something equivalent to, “I can imagine you doing such and such” or “being such and such.” And it was his projection, of course; but what he was doing was, he was looking at somebody who was saddled with limitations and saddled with discouragement or some kind of handicap, and he was saying, in essence, “I can see you being liberated and functioning beautifully.” He took responsibility for that. It was his fantasy, but you know, the way he did it and his conviction was such that you believed him. [Laughter.]
JW: Yeah, sometimes it’s been a long time—or perhaps never—that someone has told them, “You can make something different happen for yourself. You have overcome other things and you can overcome this.”

HTS: Yeah, but this is, I guess you could say, fairly common in all forms of encouragement and inspiration. But he’s taking it to another step, Jim, when somebody says, “I can actually see this.” What if somebody is saying, “I believe that you can do much better,” but the person is looking at you and they’re looking through you—seemingly into the future and they say, “I can actually see this. I can taste it. I can feel it.” And the other says, “You can?!” [Laughter] I mean, I think that is a rare quality and you can’t fake it. You just can’t; it happens. But I think what Joe was capitalizing on was his profound spiritual depth and faith and this energy and there was a kind of a dynamic quality in the guy. I mean, you had a feeling with Joe, that if you wanted, you could do anything. And that if you listened to him and you hung around long enough, you probably could do everything. [Laughter.] He wasn’t talking about going out there and being another Bill Gates or Warren Buffett or kicking ass. I mean, he was talking about doing good things so we’re talking about philosophy, spirituality, and I think this is what is sadly missing from mainstream psychology today.

JW: Could you expound on that a little bit more?

HTS: OK. I’ve just finished this book by [Jessica] Grogan, which talks about the 1960s, the humanistic psychology and Maslow, the encounter groups and all this.33 What she describes pretty clearly is the “adolescence” of psychology where there was rebellion, trying this and trying that. Some of it was good, some of it was crazy, but there was an attempt at trying to break away from behaviors and break away from psychoanalysis. Instead, they humanistically tried to realize people’s potential, thinking that you could achieve your potential in a limited time. Certainly if you go to Esalen [Institute], be in a hot tub, take your clothes off and, you know, that’s one way to do it. Then people took the EST [Erhard Seminars Training] seminars and they could seemingly reach their potential.34 But they were experimenting with this realization of people’s basic potential. What was missing from the entire movement, practically, was the recognition of improving society and what you could do for other people.

Adler was there quietly, offering a different way of reaching one’s potential; and others are promoting all of these human potential EST groups, T-groups, whatever, and Adler was saying there is a responsible way to do it. I think psychology reacted. The whole theater reacted to all of the excesses of the 1960s and the Esalen and the humanistic approach[es]. At one point, the humanistic psychology movement got really crazy.
I spent 25 years working in a hospital medical model. It’s a big push over the years to move from cognitive behavioral therapy, dialectical behavioral therapy, toward therapies that have a spiritual component—the sort of Buddhist spiritual components to mindfulness, and breathing meditation. But sometimes one gets the feeling that insurance companies just want some people medicated and controlled. Maybe that’s unfair of me to say, but unless somebody is really overtly suicidal—I think insurance companies are short-changing people from doing deeper work that could really benefit them.

Right. I think this becomes horribly prosaic, and I guess you could say there’s a risk of developing a corporate mentality—which asks, “What is marketable? How do we minimize expense? How do we maximize profit?” What is missing is a profoundly penetrating look philosophically and psychologically into the way we live and even into what we call democracy. We do not live democratically at a psychological level—very rarely do you see it. You don’t see it in school. You don’t see it in business. You don’t see it in families. We give lip service to equality, but we have astounding inequality in this country.

Who are we going to leave it to—if we believe in the evolution of a culture in a more positive direction? Who do we leave this to? Do we essentially leave it to Wall Street? Do we leave it to the banking system? Do we leave it to Washington? What are these people going to do? Do we leave it to special interest? Have we ever had open dialogues about the common good? Do we need to redefine what we mean? We went through periods of racial equality; we went through periods where we talked about the equality of women. Now, what about total equality, right down the line? Or do we just want a little bit here and there? We talk about the optimal development of people; but we’re talking about having to roll up our sleeves and confront both parents and teachers about what to do very early in life. Are the parents going to listen? Are teachers going to listen? Do you remember what happened in Vienna?

First, what do you mean by confront; or could you define confront?

“To confront,” for me, is to ask, “What do you really want? How do you want this child to develop? Do you want him to develop into somebody who obeys you and makes you proud and makes a lot of money? Or do you want your child to become some agent of positive social change in the world? Do you want your child to essentially be your possession and asset to your family? Or do you want your child to be a world citizen?” That’s what I mean by “confront.”

You confront with some good questions. You look at teachers and ask, “What is important for the children in your care, to develop? Certainly, they need to learn to read and write, but what else can you
teach them? Can you teach them about being responsible and being cooperative and being giving? Can you work on their character? That’s what I mean by “confront.” These are tough questions. Some might say, “We’re not being paid enough. It’s too much trouble.” The parents might say, “It’s none of your business. I do it. My kids are my own business.” But these questions are not being asked at a high enough level. They simply say, “Oh, if we fix the economy, things are going to be fine.”

There’s also one other factor, which I don’t think can be ignored. It’s about leadership and there is a pathetic lack of decent leadership today at all levels. We don’t train leaders; we don’t encourage leaders. It’s interesting to read Adler on leadership, from Kurt Adler and Adler, both. There aren’t that many around who really have both the character and who have the ambition, the motivation to do it. Do I trust “the mob”? No, I don’t trust “the mob,” sorry. Do I trust collective thinking? No, I don’t trust that. What I trust is—and I think this is the history of creativity: there are individuals who pop up here and there who’ve got their heads on straight. We should listen to them. [Laughter.] And can you replicate this a hundred times? No. A thousand times? No. This is why I have a profound mistrust for any of these big organizations or big groups.

\(JW:\) Right. I feel the same way. It’s not about centralization.

\(HTS:\) Oh, no! It’s about creating a climate, Jim, of profound questioning. It’s not a matter of delivering the answers—because that’s a trap. It’s a matter of, respectfully and invitingly, asking the right questions. It’s no different than Sophia talking to a neurotic person. [Laughter.] Imagine doing that at a larger scale.

**Conclusion**

\(JW:\) Is there anything that you would like to say in terms of closing, Henry? Is there any way that you can summarize what you’d really like to leave for people?

\(HTS:\) What I would like to leave for people is; maybe the best image I can offer you, Jim, is handing on the torch. Adler gave something magnificent to a lot of us. He gave it directly to Sophia. Sophia gave a lot to us. She gave a lot to me. I cannot say I invented this approach. What I simply tried to do is understand what she was saying and continue it. So what I want to do is, I want to simply hand it on, what I’ve learned. And if I add a few things to it, fine, but the core, the root of it goes right back to Adler for the theory and the philosophy, to Sophia for how to do it. I’d also like to add nuances for guys like you, who ask good questions. [Laughter.] Without the questions, there would be no answers.
Notes


3. For a comprehensive review of Wright’s work, see Pfeiffer and Gőssel (2010).


5. “Creating a Role” is the third volume of Stanislavski’s planned trilogy on the training of an actor. The first two, An Actor Prepares and Building a Character, although published thirteen years apart, were intended to describe the young actor’s regime at much the same period in his development: while training his inner qualities of emotion memory, imagination and concentration, he was also developing his physical means by rigorous work on his voice and body, the very instruments for putting into vivid and convincingly concrete form what the inner life might develop. Now, another twelve years later, we are able to issue the project third volume. This phase in Stanislavski’s teaching, which he believed an actor should come to after mastery of the other two, is the preparation of specific roles, beginning with the first reading of a play and the development of the first scene. The English title is as close as possible to the rather longer Russian one, literally, The Work of an Actor on Role” (Stanislavski, 1961/1989, ix).

6. An abridged version of Chekhov’s 1912 “On the Technique of Acting” appeared in 1953 as To the Actor. According to Moore (1984), Stanislavski considered Chekov his most brilliant student. Chekov’s own students included Clint Eastwood, Marilyn Monroe, and Yul Brynner, and his influence has been acknowledged by more recent actors as varied as Johnny Depp and Anthony Hopkins.

7. For example, more than 40 pages within 15 volumes of the 23-volume set The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud are devoted to Shakespeare’s Hamlet (see Richards, 1974).

8. Volumes 1, 5, and 12 of The Collected Works of C. G. Jung each include Jung’s reflections on acting and the theater (see Forryan & Glover, 1979).

9. On Carl Rogers, see Kirchbaum and Henderson (1989); on Eric Berne, see Berne (1964); on Robert and Mary Goulding, see Goulding and Goulding (1979).
10. On transactional analysis, see Berne (1964).
11. For authoritative information on T-groups, see Yalom and Leszcz (2005). Also, for a brief, helpful explanation of T-groups, see the website “T-Groups,” Shaping the Parish, http://shapingtheparish.com/storage/About%20T-groups.pdf.
15. James C. Overholser, Department of Psychology, at Case Western Reserve University in Ohio, is the most accessible expositor of general Socratic method today. For a thorough application of this to psychotherapy, see Stein (2013).
16. On this method in the legal profession, see Hawkins-León (1998); in education, see Elkind and Sweety (1997).
20. On Sophia de Vries, see Stein (2013); on Kurt Adler, see Adler (1972); on Anthony Bruck, see Bruck (2011). For more on Bruck, see also the website “Biographical Sketch of Anthony Bruck,” Classical Adlerian website, http://www.adlerian.us/bruck.htm.
22. The Group Case Seminars as a Classical Adlerian training technique is developed in the final major section of this interview sequence, “Extending Technologies and Techniques in Congruence with Adler.”
23. The Behavior Online site is available at http://behavior.net.
24. For information on transactional analysis in the United States, see the website of the United States of America Transactional Analysis Association, at http://usataa.usataaconference.org.
27. Stein (2014).
32. Wright (2009).
34. Rhinehart (2010); for more information on the EST movement, see the website of Erhard Seminars Training, at http://www.erhardseminars training.com/?page_id=671.

References


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