

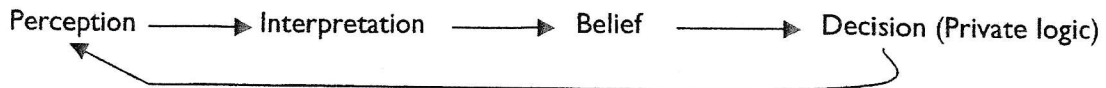
## A Brief Introduction to the Thought of Alfred Adler

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### Core ideas

1. Behavior is purposive
2. The goal of behavior is belonging (sense of connection) and meaning (significance). Mis-behavior is from "mis"-taken belief about how to find belonging/meaning.
3. People are continually making decisions based on how their world is perceived.



4. Horizontal relationships: Everyone is worthy of equal dignity and respect.

### Implications

1. The "problem" is really a "solution" to another problem that is unstated or out of awareness. The mis-behaving child is a discouraged child.
2. Gemeinschaftsgefühl (Community feeling)
  - Being part of a community (belonging/connection)
  - Being able to make a contribution to the community (significance/purpose)

### Basic tools and principles that flow from Adler's thought

1. Teach life skills
2. Pay attention to the power of perception
3. Focus on encouragement. (Connection and presence, not rah-rah)
4. Hold the tension of Kindness AND Firmness at the same time
5. Look to Mutual Respect
  - Respect for yourself and the situation (firmness)
  - Respect for the needs of the child and others (kindness)
6. Assume mistakes to be opportunities to learn.
7. Look to solutions rather than punishment

### Five Criteria for Effective Discipline

Effective Discipline:

1. **Helps children feel a sense of connection.** (Belonging and significance.)
2. **Is mutually respectful and encouraging.** (Kind and firm at the same time.)
3. **Is effective long - term.** (Considers what the child is thinking, feeling, learning, and deciding about himself and his world – and what to do in the future to survive or to thrive.)
4. **Teaches important social and life skills.** (Respect, concern for others, problem solving, and cooperation as well as the skills to contribute to the home, school or larger community.)
5. **Invites children to discover how capable they are.** (Encourages the constructive use of personal power and autonomy.)

Source: Jane Nelsen, [www.positivediscipline.com](http://www.positivediscipline.com)