LifePsych® Realities Matrix
by
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Reality #1: Born in Time and Space:

Humans do not know some fundamental but essential truths. We don't know where we came from, why we are here or where we are going. But, it seems evident that we do exist in time and space. **Consciousness** is an awesome mystery, and our **Creative Thought** attempts to answer these existential questions. Humans have created a variety of "answers," best understood as beliefs.

Reality #2: Born on planet earth in motion:

The planet earth is in motion; therefore, all that is on the planet is in motion. This fact requires a **Movement** response from all living things in the form of **Activity**. All interest in "motivation" is but an interest in how we respond to life, as the word "movement" is derived from the same language source as "motivation." Our striving is from deficit to success, from a felt "minus" to a felt "plus" position. We strive to develop a community amid chaos. Our activity creates stability, the impression of increased security, and a higher quality of life by participating in the creation of a community.

Reality #3: Born with needs not provided:

We exist on the thin and muddy crust of a planet that does not automatically provide essential food and shelter except for our goal-oriented efforts. We must put forth an individual attempt, create cooperative group efforts, and provide shelter and food to reduce our **Anxiety** about surviving as an individual and a species. Existential anxiety is a response to our self-doubts regarding our capability to meet our needs in the future. We must intentionally **Work** and be useful to others to continue our existence and perpetuate our human species. Beyond this, we work to create a comfortable experience in life.

Reality #4: Born as unitary individuals:

We are born by separating from our mothers as helpless and dependent infants, immediately needing others to survive. Nature has not provided us with the biological equipment to survive without help. The initial experience of the "social feeling" in relations with others is the first experience of security for the helpless infant. Socialization is a profound source of belonging and security, leading us to solve the unpleasant feeling of **Separateness**. Having co-evolved with all others from birth, we are social beings, socially embedded, and we have a life-long desire to belong in the context of these **Relations**. Due to the reality of death, we must replicate ourselves by conceiving and birthing children in the context of sex, love, family, and community relationships. We deeply wish to belong with others and are constantly motivated to satisfy this desire, whether children are involved or not.

"The first evidence of the inborn social feeling unfolds in his early search
for tenderness, which leads him to seek the proximity of adults."
-Alfred Adler

Reality #5: Born incapable:

We are born as unique but **Powerless** individuals and possess a continuous desire (a striving) to be competent and significant. We are among others throughout our lives and make efforts to overcome basic and universal inferiority feelings. Our uniqueness means we are creative in our subjective interpretations of life and respond uniquely to movement. We create unified meanings to life, and all our thoughts, actions, feelings, physiology, memories, and dreams lead toward unified goals as we create a unique life-style and sense of self-significance. We are each a whole system, undivided, and are differentiated by our self-created guiding themes, though influenced by genetics and past experiences. Who we are is important to us, and our task of **Self-development** toward competence and the goal of being uniquely significant among others is always motivating for us. We strive to find our place in the world and desire to be a uniquely recognized existence by others.

Reality #6: Born naked:

We are all born naked and experience **Helplessness**. All living things want to live and strive to do so. Survival is not left to chance but is sought purposely. Evolutionary psychologists maintain that human behavior is an output of **Adaptive** efforts that evolved in the context of ancestral environments. Behaviors that occur universally in all cultures are good examples of evolutionary adaptations.

For example, all living things have six characteristics in common:

Organization
Movement
Growth
Reproduction
Metabolism
Adaptation

For the helpless infant, all of these natural characteristics of living things contribute to the goal of survival.

LifePsych® Realities Matrix[1]

Basic Existential Realities[2]	Basic Experiential Feelings[3]	Basic Compensatory Responses[4]	Basic Self Interest [5] Goal (Task)	Basic Social Interest [6] Goal (Task)
			Goal / Task Choices [7]	
Born in Time and Space 8	Consciousness 9	Creative Thought 10	Nihilism (Aimlessness) 11	Meaningfulness (Meaning-making) 12
Born on planet earth in motion 13	Movement 14	Activity 15	Chaos (Individualism) 16	Stability (Community) 17
Born with basic needs not provided 18	Anxiety 19	Work 20	Self-elevation (Entitlement) 21	Usefulness (Contribution) 22
Born as unitary individuals 23	Separateness 24	Relations 25	Control (Domination) 26	Belonging (Cooperation) 27
Born Incapable 28	Powerless 29	Self-development 30	Self-doubt (Withdrawal) 31	Confidence (Connection) 32
Born Naked 33	Helplessness 34	Adaptation 35	Individualistic Survival (Hunting) 36	Group Survival (Gathering) 37

Annotations for the Matrix

1 The LifePsych® Realities Matrix integrates Existential Psychology with the work of Erich Fromm, Abraham H. Maslow and Alfred Adler. This integration is the basic model for LifePsych® Academy.

2 From the raw existence of human life on planet earth, we experience life as six subjective realities. In return, we actively construct our impressions, interpret our situation and generate our unique responses. Humans are active and creative beings.

3 The six subjective realities inspire six basic experiential feelings experienced by all humans from birth to death. These six feelings stimulate how we creatively respond.

4 While these six experiential feelings explain how we are all the same, we compensate for these feelings differently, and our creative choices explain how we respond differently. While these feelings biologically generate compensatory responses, we are free to make basic choices regarding how we express these choices.

5 Early training in life and genetic predispositions will influence these choices. As we mature, our experience with life's consequences and guidance from role models will create different inclinations. We will tend toward basic self-interest or social-interest goals, depending upon our self-knowledge and willingness to be courageous. If one does not have social interest, one is self-absorbed and only concerned with oneself.

6 One of Alfred Adler's key concepts is that of social interest. "Social interest" in German is "Gemeinschaftsgefuhl," which roughly translates as "community feeling." This feeling is opposed to one's private self-interest. One's "style of life" is the personal narrative one has devised to cope with being-in-the-world. If one moves in harmony with social interest, one enacts a "useful" style of life. Our "useful" response is goal oriented and conceptualized in the form of six basic psychological goals of life (survival, self-significance, belonging, usefulness, stability, and meaningfulness), where each goal has an independent task (gathering, connection, cooperation, contribution, community, and meaning-making). "Life-style" is a concept is similar to the "harmonious totality" described by Goethe and the "organizing idea" described by Nietzsche. These writers greatly influenced Adler. LifePsych® Academy espouses the concept that achieving the goals of Survival, Confidence, Belonging, Usefulness, Community, and Meaning contributes to lifelong resilience.

7 "A feeling of strength comes when a person realizes that goals represent choices, and there is a gain in self-confidence when the individual comes to realize that he or she makes choices and sets goals." Ferguson, Eva Dreikurs, "Adler and Dreikurs: Cognitive-Social Dynamic Innovators," The Journal of Individual Psychology, Vol. 57, No. 4, Winter 2001, pp. 324-34. Two important statements on this subject by Adler are found in Understanding Human Nature, 1927: "We orient ourselves according to a fixed point which we have artificially created, which does not, in reality, exist, a fiction." p. 67; and "The purpose of this assumption is simply to orient ourselves in the chaos of existence so that we can arrive at some apperception of relative values." p. 68.
The LifePsych® Academy Model espouses the proposition that achieving survival, Confidence, Belonging, Usefulness, Stability, and Meaning is the blueprint for enduring resilience.

8 The philosophy of space and time was both an inspiration and a central aspect of early analytic philosophy. The subject focuses on several basic issues, including whether time and space exist independently of the mind, whether they exist independently, what accounts for time's unidirectional flow, whether times other than the present moment exist, and questions about the nature of identity. From a practical point of view, the LifePsych® model assumes the world has time and space for everyone.

9 Consciousness, at its simplest, is aware of our internal and external existence. Sometimes it is synonymous with "the mind," and at other times, just an aspect of the mind. In the past, it was one's "inner life," the world of introspection, private thought, imagination, and volition. Modern research into the brain often includes any experience, cognition, feeling, or perception. It may be awareness, "awareness of awareness," or self-awareness. There might be different levels or orders of consciousness, different kinds of consciousness, or just one kind with different features. Other

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questions include whether only humans are conscious, all animals, or even the whole universe connected as one consciousness.

10 Accepting the existence of consciousness, the addition of disciplined reaction introduces the concept of intentional thought. Philosopher David Hume (1711-1776) stated that his most significant contribution to the field of philosophy was his concept of the "Association of Ideas," namely: "There is a connection between different thoughts or ideas of the mind and their appearance in memory or imagination. Even in fleeting thoughts and open conversations, their connections can be observed. This is the case whatever language is used: different ideas are connected. There are three principles of connection among ideas: Resemblance, Contiguity (relationship in time or place) and Cause and effect. These can be illustrated by a picture leading our thoughts to the original (Resemblance), by one room in a building leading us to a discourse concerning the others (Contiguity), and by the looking at a wound leading our thoughts to the pain which followed it (Cause and Effect). On examination, we may become assured that these three form the complete list of connections. The same evidence follows us in our second principle, of the liberty of the imagination to transpose and change its ideas."

Theoretical Physicist Werner Heisenberg (1901-1976) provided us with the Uncertainty Principle. In quantum mechanics, Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle proclaims that there is "fuzziness" in nature, and a fundamental limit to what we can know about the behavior of quantum particles. The uncertainty principle implies that it is generally impossible to predict the value of a quantity with arbitrary certainty, even if all initial conditions are specified. Psychologically, people can behave unpredictably at any moment, as it is difficult to precisely understand and predict the output of a person's "private logic." Therefore, it is best to evaluate behavioral patterns over time, such as the "Observable Behavioral Pattern," rather than evaluate isolated incidents. Adlerian psychology defines this concept as "Two Points of a Line" (see LifePsych® Academy Glossary). This is known as indeterminism in philosophy and is the opposite of "cause and effect."

Therefore, behavior cannot be readily predicted on the smallest to largest scales of nature, including human behavior. Thought is, consequently, creative, goal-oriented, and not determined by specific stimuli.

11 Commonly, nihilism refers to existential nihilism, according to which life is without objective meaning, purpose, or intrinsic value. Moral nihilism asserts that nothing is morally right or wrong; it just "is." Among others, nihilism may also take the form of epistemological nihilism, according to which actual knowledge is impossible, and several metaphysical forms of nihilism, which assert that composite objects do not exist, that necessary objects do not exist, or even that reality itself does not exist. Given the LifePsych® model, the task of aimlessness strives for the goal of nihilism.

12 Meaningfulness, as a goal, encourages us to transcend to a higher level of creative thought by connecting not just with our thinking but also with our emotions and, importantly, with our true human nature. To know ourselves requires time and effort—to question and reflect upon our thoughts, feelings, and intuition to gain insights into what is important or meaningful to us in our lives and work. To know what is meaningful, we must discover and embrace our true nature or core essence. Our essence defines us and is at the heart of what makes us unique human beings. Our core essence frames our sense of self to help us clarify and understand our purpose, leading to a more joyful and deeply authentic life. Our nature lies at the deepest origins of our spirit, beyond the cognitive, beyond thinking. Given the LifePsych® model, intentional meaning-making strives for the goal of meaningfulness. Our striving is from deficit to success, from a felt "minus" to a felt "plus" position. We strive to survive, develop ourselves, create belonging and achieve solutions for problems that make the impression of higher quality of life in the community context. Ultimately, we seek to create meaning during our short existence in life. Over eons of human history, we have successfully survived. As very talented animals, we find ourselves now searching for meaning. Our most significant and sophisticated task lies in front of us.

13 The planet earth is in motion; therefore, all that is on the planet is in motion. This fact requires a "movement" response from all living things in the form of activity. These goals/tasks form six realities that exist as we find ourselves on Earth in the vast universe. All interest in "motivation" is but as interest in how we respond to life, as the word "movement" comes from the same language source as "motivation."

14 "I began to develop the finalistic viewpoint of Individual Psychology, and came to the conclusion that we must look upon the psychic life as a movement, directed toward the solution of certain almost immutable life tasks." Adler, Alfred. Superiority and Social Interest: a collection of later writings. Northwestern University Press, Evanston, Ill., 1964, p. 114

15 "All forms of behavior (thinking, feeling, acting, physical responses) are thought of by Adler as movement of the individual in his field of action."
Forgus, R. & Shulman, B. H., <u>Personality: a cognitive view</u>. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc. 1979, p. 106. Also, from Loren Grey: "Perhaps the law which influences our temporal lives the most immediately and profoundly is the law of motion. From birth to death, the necessity for survival (perhaps another law itself), ordains that the human body be in ceaseless internal and external motion." Grey, L.
<u>Alfred Adler, the forgotten prophet: a vision for this 21st century</u>, Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1998, p. 30. Put another way, Adler claimed that "things can only be changed by acting."

16 Chaos is the goal of the individualist, as the "community" cannot be trusted, and trust is only in oneself. ("I alone can fix this" -Presidential candidate Donald J. Trump). The individualist believes that they can succeed without others or at the expense of others and do not need "the group." They have no use for the community, coupled with the deep fear that the group could not accept them for who they are. Individualistic striving for entitlement at the group's expense is the ultimate "sin" of social living in a civilized society.

17 Stability found in the community context requires stable leadership, selected by the democratic process of social living. Quoting Adler: "The rules of communal life are just as self-explanatory as the laws of climate, which compel certain measures for the protection against cold, for the building of houses, and the like. The compulsion toward the community and communal life exists in institutions whose forms we need not entirely understand, as in religion, where the sanctification of the communal formulae serves as a bond between members of the community."
Alfred Adler, <u>Understanding Human Nature</u>, p. 35.
Also:
"Leadership is the ability of humans to relate deeply to each other in the search for a perfect union. Leadership is a consensual task, a sharing of ideas and a sharing of responsibilities, where 'leader' is a leader for the moment only, where the leadership exerted must be validated by the consent of followers, and where leadership lies in the struggles of a community to find meaning for itself." William F. Foster, quoted in Developments in Business Simulation and Experiential Learning, Volume 26, 1999 Leadsimm: Collaborative Leadership Development for the Knowledge Society, John P. Dentico, University of California at San Diego.
Some can use communities for the development of dependence. Or, communities can become rich sources of encouragement. People choose one or the other depending on their level of self-doubt or confidence.

18 We exist on the thin and muddy crust of a planet that does not provide essential food and shelter except for our efforts. Charles Darwin pointed out that weak animals do not live alone. Alfred Adler mused that we must consider humans as weak animals. We must put forth an individual effort, create cooperative group efforts, and contribute to providing shelter and food to reduce our anxiety about surviving as an individual and as a species. Only our social life, constructing the division of labor, has provided humans with favorable conditions in the face of nature's elements. Existential anxiety is a response to our self-doubts that basic needs will be met in the future. In response to uncertainty, a useful effort is most easily observed during natural disasters, when it is easy to see the spirit of "pulling together" and the benefit of neighbors helping neighbors. In short, we must actively work and be useful to others to continue our existence and perpetuate the human species. Beyond this, we work to create a higher quality of life.

19 Known by the existential philosophers with the German word "Aengstlichkeit." The English derivative is "angst," proposed by adherents of existentialism to express the concept that anxiety profoundly characterizes the human experience from birth to death. Anxiety primarily arises from our developing awareness that we are responsible for the choices required to survive on the planet, coupled with our collective self-doubt about our ability to do so.

20 "Man is not only a rational and social animal. He can also be defined as a producing animal, capable of transforming the materials which he finds at hand, using his reason and imagination. Not only can he produce, he must produce in order to live." From Erich Fromm, <u>Man for himself: an inquiry into the psychology of ethics</u>.
Henry Holt and Company, New York, N.Y., 1947, p. 84.

21 Self-elevation is the goal of striving for individualistic entitlement, to be <u>above</u> all others. Paradoxically, because it moves against social cooperation and interest, this is also why it does not function well – when this goal is achieved, it

is not satisfying. Tyranny feeds on dissatisfaction as all "successful" goal achievements in alignment with self-elevation are felt as empty vessels resulting from the loss of belonging and self-respect.

22 "The most sensible estimate of the value of any activity is its helpfulness to mankind, present and future. . . . we know when we are guided by the impulse to act usefully, and the better a person's adjustment is, the nearer he approaches to true perception." Adler, A., Problems of Neurosis, Philip Mairet (Ed.) New York: Harper Torchbooks, Harper & Row, 1964, p. 78. Striving to make useful contributions for the benefit of the group, is evidence of the "courageous contributor."

23 We are born by separating from our mother as helpless and dependent infants, immediately needing others to survive, as nature has not provided us with the biological equipment to survive alone. The initial experience of the "social feeling" in relations with others is the first experience of security for the helpless infant, a deep source of relations security leading us to solve the unpleasant feeling of separateness. Having co-evolved with all others from birth, we are social beings, socially embedded, and we have a life-long desire to belong in the context of these relations. The development of speech was critical to our cooperative and communal life. Strong animals are self-sufficient and do not need to communicate. Due to the reality of death, we must replicate ourselves by conceiving and birthing children in the context of sex, love, family, and community relationships. We deeply wish to belong with others and are constantly motivated to satisfy this desire.

24 "The deepest need of man, then, is the need to overcome his separateness, to leave the prison of his aloneness. The absolute failure to achieve this aim means insanity, because the panic of complete isolation can be overcome only by such a radical withdrawal from the world outside that the feeling of separation disappears - because the world outside, from which one is separated, has disappeared." Erich Fromm, The Art of Loving, NY: Bantam Books, 1956, p. 8. When we are alone, we are governed by our "private logic" which is untethered from our social reality. Such is the genesis of the "lone gunman" and suicide.

25 We need each other to speak, listen, and hear each deeply. We are social creatures, and our social interactions move us from the loneliness of our private logic into social reality. Social interactions open the aperture to our social reality, and we reduce the reliance on our private logic. Hypothesized by Adler as the "social feeling" with the German word "Gemeinschaftsgefuhl." Adler writes: "Human psychological life is not capable of doing just as it likes but is constantly confronted with tasks which have arrived from somewhere. All these tasks are inseparably tied up with the logic of man's communal life." From: The Individual Psychology of Alfred Adler, Ansbacher & Ansbacher, p. 128. Also: "The first evidence of the inborn social feeling unfolds in his early search for tenderness, which leads him to seek the proximity of adults." Adler, A. Understanding Human Nature, 1927, p. 46.

26 Control is the goal of the domination task. Often, control is generated by the fear of being controlled by others, and domination is seen as the "safe-guarded" method for fending off being controlled by others. However, "successful" controlling others might seem in the moment, successful domination leads to discouragement in all interpersonal relationships.

27 We all have a deep psychological need to belong, and relationship cooperation is task-oriented toward this goal. "Every human being brings the disposition for social interest with him, but then it must be developed through upbringing, especially through correct guidance of the individual's creative power. We can assume that the innate substratum of the ability to cooperate will become increasingly stronger through the training of the generations." Adler, Alfred. Superiority and social interest: a collection of later writings. Northwestern University Press, Evanston, Ill., 1964, p. 40. Also, "Equality is the ironclad logic of social living." -Rudolf Dreikurs.

28 We are born as unique but helpless individuals and possess a continuous desire (a striving) to be competent and significant among others throughout our lives. We constantly try to overcome basic feelings of self-doubt, inadequacy, and incompleteness. Our uniqueness means we are creative in our subjective interpretations of life and respond uniquely to movement. We create unified meanings to life, and all our thoughts, actions, feelings, physiology, memories, and dreams lead toward unified goals as we create a unique life-style. We are each a whole system, undivided, and are differentiated by our self-created guiding themes. Who we are is important to us, and our task of self-development toward competence and the goal of being unique among others motivates us. We strive to find our

place in the world and desire that it be a uniquely recognized existence, a form of self-significance. Happiness will be experienced if such an existence is also socially useful with interest in relations with others.

29 Hypothesized by Adler as the "inferiority feeling" with the German word "Minderwertigkeitsgesuhl." In her writings, Dr. Lydia Sicher suggests "Two Problems in early life where 1) the child is constantly exposed to the vertical plane of life by the fact of being picked up and put down and 2) the designation that one is a child and one is an adult creates the impression that the "...desire to *be* and the striving to *become* are evaluated as opposites." The collected works of Lydia Sicher: an Adlerian perspective (QED Press, Ft. Bragg,, California, 1991, edited by Adele K. Davidson, Ed.D.), p.81.
Graham Crookshank (1873-1933) suggested that Albert Einstein and Alfred Adler were close friends and that Einstein referred to Individual Psychology as the "Psychology of Relativity" because of the overarching concept of "inferiority" as the primary motivating factor, similar to the concept of "General Relativity" created by Einstein. Adler claimed the sense of "general inferiority" was derived from 1) the helplessness of the newborn; 2) the early realization on the part of a child that they are weaker than an adult. "Individual Psychology" was derived from the German word "Individuum" which meant: "that which cannot be divided. Many Adlerians have suggested that "Holistic" Psychology would have been a better name.

30 From an Adlerian perspective, it is more important to understand the unique context of people when conceptualizing development rather than rely on specific stages or tasks in development. Everyone is unique and requires the time and space to "become" who they are inclined to become.

"If we treat people as if they were what they ought to be we will help them to become what they are capable of being." -Goethe

"All the evidence that we have indicates that it is reasonable to assume in practically every human being, and certainly in almost every newborn baby, that there is an active will toward health, an impulse towards growth, or towards the actualization." -Abraham H. Maslow

31 The basic self-interest task of withdrawal is motivated by the goal of self-doubt. Withdrawal from others is a task that attempts to protect a person from being exposed as having deep self-doubt. Vanity is another term for self-doubt, as vanity simultaneously refers to "excessive pride" and the "lack of usefulness." Vanity is posturing oneself positively, which betrays the more profound truth of excessive self-doubt.
Quoting Adler:
"In the forefront of these manifestations are pride, vanity, and the desire to conquer everyone at any price. The latter may be subtly accomplished by the relative elevation of the individual, by his deprecation of all those with whom he comes in contact. In the latter case the important thing is the "distance" which separates him from his fellows. His attitude is not only uncomfortable for the environment, but for the individual who practice it, because it continually brings him into contact with the dark side of life and prevents him from experiencing any joy in living." Adler, A. Understanding Human Nature, 1927, p. 70. "Self-doubt" as a "goal" may be hard to conceptualize until one recognizes the alternative, which is the goal of "self-significance." Behavior is goal-oriented, and self-doubt (vanity) is a goal striving for success, however misguided it is. Self-doubt as a goal shields people from the conclusion that who they are is inadequate, not realizing that all humans feel degrees of inadequacy.

32 While everyone experiences some degree of self-doubt, "Every human being strives for significance, but people always make mistakes if they do not recognize that their own significance lies in their contribution to the lives of others." Alfred Adler in What Life Could Mean to You, Oneworld Publications, England, 1992, p. 19. (First published in 1931). "If we want to illuminate a conception of the striving for significance in this light, we must say: Of course, it can come about only if it is founded in the original disposition. But what we see, such as the character, cannot be thought of outside society, because the striving for significance, seen as character, must be regarded as a social function which can show itself only within a social frame." Adler, Alfred. Superiority and social interest: a collection of later writings. Northwestern University Press, Evanston, Ill., 1964, p. 212. Confidence includes our assurance that we are significant.

33 We are all born naked and helpless as we exit the womb.

34 The birth struggle is our first experience with life outside the womb. This "primal" experience is chilly, light-filled, exposed, and probably fearful. This helplessness is our first "minus" experience, to be followed by many more. Adler was clear that our first impulse was survival, which energized other innate dispositions. Infants move from being in "water and connected" to being in "air and separated." As we mature, we become more capable, but the deep memory of fear and helplessness probably lingers.

35 As an infant, we scream, cry, shutter, and consequently gain attention and comfort. People talk to us, they hold us, and we feel comfortably connected again. This is our first experience with social interaction as a source of security, and we "love" it. Through our proactive adaptations, we begin to learn how to survive, become capable, and feel secure in the community of others.

36 Individualistic Hunting: "Self-interest" motivation means striving for basic needs such as food, water and shelter, and safety are met with individualistic efforts. For example, what made the Covid-19 pandemic worse in America was the political support for "toxic individualism."

37 Group Gathering: "Social-interest" motivation means striving for basic needs such as food, water, and shelter, and safety are met with group efforts and sharing. For example, what could have made the Covid-19 pandemic less lethal in America would have been a "community attitude" designed to support the creation of "herd" immunity.