**ADLERIAN INDIVIDUAL PSYCHOLOGY**

**Adler's psychology**

Adler shifted the grounds of psychological determinance from sex and [libido](http://www.answers.com/topic/libido-psychoanalysis), the Freudian standpoint, to environmental factors. He gave special prominence to societal factors. According to him a person has to combat or confront three forces: societal, love-related, and vocational forces. These confrontations determine the final nature of a personality. Adler based his theories on the pre-adulthood development of a person. He laid stress on such areas as hated children, physical deformities at birth, birth order, etc.

Adlerian psychology shows parallels with the [humanistic psychology](http://www.answers.com/topic/humanistic-psychology) of [Abraham Maslow](http://www.answers.com/topic/abraham-maslow), who acknowledged Adler's influence on his own theories. Both individual psychology and humanistic psychology hold that the individual human being is the best determinant of his or her own needs, desires, interests, and growth.

[Classical Adlerian psychology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Classical_Adlerian_psychology) makes a distinction between primary and secondary inferiority feelings. A primary inferiority feeling is said to be rooted in the young child's original experience of weakness, helplessness and dependency. It can then be intensified by comparisons to siblings and adults. A secondary inferiority feeling relates to an adult's experience of being unable to reach an unconscious, fictional final goal of subjective security and success to compensate for the inferiority feelings.

**The theory of compensation, defeat and over-compensation**

According to Adler, an individual derives his personality traits from these essentially external factors. The character of the individual is formed by his responses to their influence in the following ways:

**Compensation**

Whenever a person suffers from any disadvantages that make him or her inferior to others, his or her main aim becomes to bring those disadvantages to an end. Those who are able to do this become successful in their lives on both social as well as individual bases.

**Resignation**

There are those who give in to their disadvantages and become reconciled to them. Such people are in the majority. The attitude of the world towards them is of a cool, rather uninterested sympathy.

**Over-compensation**

There are some persons who become so infatuated with the idea of compensating for their disadvantages that they end up over-indulging in the pursuit. These are the neurotics.

Thus, the external factors are vital in character formation.

Read more: <http://www.answers.com/topic/individual-psychology#ixzz1aclApNyK>

**ALFRED ADLER’S INDIVIDUAL PSYCHOLOGY**

Alfred Adler was the founder of *Individual Psychology*. According to his theory, every child experiences the feelings of inferiority as the result of being surrounded by stronger and more capable adults. As the child grows, s/he becomes obsessed by the original feelings of inferiority experienced earlier and strives for power and recognition. If the child fails to meet certain life challenges, s/he will develop a primary inferiority complex.

When a person who felt inferior as a child because of his/her perceived weakness faces a challenge that he/she can’t meet, it becomes a secondary inferiority complex. Personality develops by the individual’s responses to their disadvantages: *compensation, resignation* and *over-compensation*.

**Definitions**

**compensation:** When a person aims becomes to bring his/her disadvantages to an end by becoming more competent in those areas. People who are able to do this, become successful in their lives on both social as well as individual bases.

**resignation:** When a person gives in to their disadvantages and becomes reconciled to them. Such people are in the majority. The attitude of the world towards them is of a cool, rather uninterested sympathy.

**over-compensation:** When a person becomes so concerned about compensating for their disadvantages, they end up over-doing it in the pursuit.

**Directions**

Identify the each of the following situations as compensation, resignation or over-compensation.

1. A student who has always had difficulty with math courses, opts to focus more on English and Social Science courses in high school.

2. Not having a natural ability to play basketball, a teenager practices three times per week in order to make the school basketball team.

3. Feeling unrecognized in his youth, a man constantly gives orders to his co-workers and speaks to them as though they are his employees.

4. Feeling insecure about her body shape, a woman frequently wears over-sized clothing that hides her figure.

5. Feeling insecure about being accepted by others, a woman exhibits loud and animated behaviour.

6. To alleviate his fear of germs, a man washes his hands for at least five minutes every two hours.