
The work of Alfred Adler
and Rudolf Dreikurs in
reference to behaviour in
classroom contexts and
counselling of students
with high levels of
attentional and power-
seeking behaviour.
[Includes an extended
appendix addressing
narcissistic behaviours].

A short introduction

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*“For man is a social animal.”**

Aristotle

*“The prime principle then in (man’s) constitution is the social.”***

Marcus Aurelius

*“There is no such thing as Society. There are individual men and women, and there are families.”****

Margaret Thatcher

“The communal need regulates all relationships ...”

“No human being ever appeared except in a community for human beings ...”

Alfred Adler *Understand Human Nature* 1927, p 35.

“An understanding of the necessity for dealing with man as a social being is the essential conclusion of our studies.”

(Ibid, p 46).

“We see the child as a social being who wants to find his place at home, in school and in the world.”

Dreikurs, R.; Grunwald, B. B. And Pepper, F. C. (1982) (px1)

* Aristotle *The Nichomachean Ethics* [Transl. J.A.K. Thompson] Penguin Classics 1969, London. Book one, p 37.

** Marcus Aurelius *The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius* Harvard Classics [Ed. Charles W. Eliot] p 250.

*** In *Women’s Own* 31 October 1987.

Introduction

In our more challenging schools teachers – daily – have to face, and address highly attentional behaviour and confronting and challenging behaviours in a small but disturbingly significant percentage of their students.

Such behaviours present from a range of factors of course. This discussion paper, however, will focus on such behaviours as they are *expressed as a central feature of a student seeking to identify and belong within their immediate classroom peers* (and their wider school community).

I have drawn primarily on the work of Alfred Adler and Rudolf Dreikurs. Their theory and practice of seeing maladaptive behaviour in children and adolescents as *goal directed, and compensatory* – in students *seeking to belong* to their immediate social groupings (in school) – offers insightful understandings about challenging behaviours. Their work also addresses how a student's sense of inferiority (the inferiority complex) and an extended sense of superiority, is expressed in the behaviours teachers often see in classrooms. Their emphasis on how teachers can enable such students to be aware of, and 'own' their behaviour enables valuable practical approaches in supporting such students. There is also an extended note addressing narcissistic patterns of behaviour as expressions of maladaptive attention and power (see appendix).

Alfred Adler and Rudolf Dreikurs were psychiatrists whose theoretical work has influenced psychologists and educators in their understandings about individual behaviour with regard to groups and social contexts. Dreikurs, in particular, attenuated Adler's work to student behaviour and how teachers can more constructively understand individuals' behaviour in relation to the child's 'goal' and how the child seeks to 'belong' in their social groupings in classrooms (and the wider school setting).

This paper is a brief introduction to the theoretical perspectives and understandings of Alfred Adler and Rudolf Dreikurs with particular reference to *the 'goals of behaviour' as they relate to distracting and disruptive behaviour in groups*; particularly in classroom contexts.

Alfred Adler (1870-1937)

Alfred Adler was a psychiatrist in Vienna and was one of the leading members in the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society (1900) whose members included Freud.

He eventually parted company with Freud (primarily with reference to the views of Freud concerning sexual conflicts in infancy and their supposed effect on later neuroses, see later, p 9 in appendix). Adler believed that while the individual, and their interior world of self, crucially shapes one's identity and relationships, it is the *dynamic of social relationships* and its impact on the self that has significant implications and outcomes for psychological and social wellbeing. While Adler's approach is often termed 'individual psychology', he emphasised that the individual strives to form their sense of self *within, and in relation to, their social relationships*; firstly within their family dynamic and – then – their wider social world. This 'striving' to belong is also related to the individual's perception of inferiority in relation to others and how they compensate for their feelings of inferiority.

'This feeling of inferiority is the driving force, the starting point from which every childish striving originates. ... it determines the very goal of his existence, and prepares the path along which the goal may be reached.' (Adler, 1927, p 65).

We are, essentially, social beings.

It is in that natural, creative tension between the sense of individuality and the emergent social self that key aspects of one's identity and personality are formed.

Each individual has their own 'peculiar teleology' as they seek to understand their social place and space in their particular family and the social reach beyond. The key driving feature being the 'need to belong'; our primary social need. One's sense of, and degree, of inferiority is in natural tension with this need 'to belong' and has significant implications for one's psychological wellbeing.

Adlerian psychology is concerned with the capacity and enabling of the individual in relation to others in their social context; family, school, work and wider society. A healthy 'social connectedness' is an important factor in our overall mental health. The health of that 'social connectedness' is affected for good or ill by the individual's sense and degree of inferiority (or superiority – see later).

Adler's essential therapeutic approach sought to enable the individual to raise their awareness and understanding of their "mistaken style" of striving in the way they seek to develop meaningful and socially co-operative ways of relating to others.

Rudolf Dreikurs (Adler's colleague) further developed Adlerian psychology to address child and adolescent perspectives, through awareness raising, in children and counselling about their 'mistaken goals' of behaviour. He also stresses the essential nature, and place, of purposeful encouragement that can enable socially meaningful and positive, co-operative behaviours. His use of school-based approaches based on democratic classrooms and building personal and social confidence has had a significant impact on educational practice in areas such as discipline and behaviour support.

In the early 1930s Alfred Adler migrated to the USA commensurate with the rise of Nazism and the closing of his clinics (due to his Jewish heritage). He lectured widely there and his work has left a lasting impact on 'democratic' and humanistic approaches to raising children and to building co-operative approaches to education based on social interest.¹

Rudolf Dreikurs (1897-1972)

Rudolf Dreikurs (like Adler) was a Viennese psychiatrist who turned his attention and research to the practical outworking of Adlerian psychological theory to social psychology. He was both a student and colleague of Alfred Adler taking his work to America, becoming professor at the Chicago Medical School and the Director of the Alfred Adler Institute (Chicago).

In attenuating Adlerian theory to classroom contexts his emphasis was essentially humanitarian and democratic. His psychological insights into how individual behaviour interacts with perceptions about 'social belonging' resonates well with the reality of student behaviour in day-to-day school life. His theoretical approach to understanding how maladaptive student behaviours arises from mistaken social-behaviour goals, and how to support students in awareness of their social-behaviour goals, has immediate practical utility in counselling and behaviour support.

The need to belong : ‘goal’ and behaviour

When a child enters the ‘society’ of a school, and a classroom – their primary *social need* is ‘to belong’. A child has many needs, of course, but their primary *social* need revolves around how they will ‘fit in’, ‘relate to ...’, be ‘accepted / approved of’ by others – particularly by their immediate age peers.

Many children (thankfully) learn to ‘belong’ (socially) in reasonable and co-operative ways. In the natural ‘up and down-ness’ of daily life they learn that co-operative behaviour and relationships are beneficial to one’s personal and social wellbeing. They learn the fundamental social norms and expectations. They also learn to ‘give’ and ‘take’, to work by the rules and routines ...good and bad days alike (again – thankfully!); they learn to co-operate.

Some children, however, display highly distracting and (at times) maladaptive and destructive social behaviours such as *frequent* attentional behaviours and confronting and power-seeking behaviours. Rudolf Dreikurs argued that such behaviours are the child’s attempt at ‘belonging’ to their peer group, they are not *only* (or merely) expressing poor or ‘bad’ behaviours. In this sense their maladaptive behaviour is ‘compensatory’; the student’s goal (as behaviour – even maladaptive behaviour) is their mistaken way of ‘belonging’. Adler had earlier coined the term *inferiority complex* to denote and describe and delineate behaviour patterns that seek to compensate (and *overcompensate*) for one’s sense of social inferiority.

The concept of *inferiority complex* was developed by Alfred Adler to describe how the individual conceives themselves in their relationship to those significant others and groups that form his social identity (family, core friends / peers, school, work ...) (see p 6).

Notwithstanding a child’s ‘causative pathology’², they still have to learn to belong in social settings, beginning with their family dynamic and then at school. Adlerian psychology does not deny the complexities of human behaviour or ‘behaviour disorders’, or the pre-conditions of a child’s family dynamic as it affects their social perception and behaviour. Adlerian psychology argues that a child *still has to deal with the fundamental social need – and will – to belong*. It is in

this daily social context that teachers seek to help children to belong in constructive and co-operative ways.

It is also in this *social dynamic* that teachers have to deal with the 'normal range' of distracting and disruptive behaviours as well as maladaptive and (at times) destructive behaviours of some of the children we are called to teach, encourage and support.

The inferiority complex

'It is the feeling of inferiority, inadequacy, insecurity, which determines the goals of an individual's existence. The tendency to push into the limelight, to compel the attention of parents, makes itself felt in the first days of life. Here are found the first indications of the awakening desire for recognition developing itself under the concomitant influence of the sense of inferiority, with its purpose the attainment of a goal in which the individual is seemingly superior to his environment.' (Adler, 1927, p 67).

It is normal for individuals (in their social development and social engagement) to seek to overcome real or imagined inferiorities because of the feelings, and thoughts occasioned by such 'inferiorities' (particularly in relationships with others). 'Overcompensation' is a term utilised by Adler to describe the individual's attempt to deny, conceal or exaggerate efforts to deal with their sense of inferiority. He also utilised the term 'superiority complex', where the individual's perception of self (in relation to others) is exaggerated and extreme.

Such compensatory behaviours are often characterised by a striving for 'superiority'. This can at times lead to patterns of dominating behaviour (over others). As one psychologist notes :

"Individuals who are suffering from excessive feelings of inferiority are also driven by an exaggerated notion of their own worth, which takes the form of an unreasonable guiding fiction toward which they strive ..." Chaplin (1975) p 254.

This is also a typical feature of narcissistic personalities; where the individual's belief is expressed thus :- 'I deserve and demand respect; I am so special'; 'I am *more* special than ...'. This unreasonable and unrealistic self-perception can lead to extreme selfishness and controlling behaviour (see, later, the extended appendix). According to Ansbacher (1985), present day

understanding of narcissism shows remarkable similarity to Adler's views on psychodynamics and neurotic egocentricity.

The 'reality gap' between a person's 'private logic' (Adler) and a person's daily social reality also contributes to an individual's anxiety and, hence, more striving – through maladaptive behaviours (the overcompensation).

Adler (and Dreikurs) have argued that the family dynamic (and the family constellation*) is a significant factor in how such feelings of inferiority develop and are dealt with constructively or otherwise by an individual in their relation with others. Dreikurs (1982) further argues, however, that schools can enable students to be more behaviourally aware of their 'mistaken goals' (of belonging) and with support, understanding and guidance they can learn to challenge their mistaken goals and pursue constructive and co-operative ways of belonging. (See later).

Family 'constellation' and behaviour

Adler and Dreikurs argued that the roots of such mistaken goals arise in that first social dynamic – the family. Where parents *over* indulge a child or are *overly* permissive or *overly* protective or *overly* dominating (and emotionally disaffecting) then this will significantly affect the child's sense of inferiority and their perception of 'how they belong' in their family dynamic. This is where one's feelings – and perception – of inferiority or a confident sense of social self are formed and 'worked out' in social behaviour and relationships. Dreikurs writes a great deal about 'the family constellation'; the perception of first to second born, and 'middle child' (in larger families) and, of course, 'the youngest child' (in larger families). He explains the nature of sibling rivalry³ and 'competition' for parental attention and approval within the child's conception of the 'inferiority complex'. It is within such family constellations (as those noted above) that 'patterns' of negative attention and power are conceived and developed.

* Both Adler and Dreikurs believed that the relationships the child forms within their family contribute significantly to 'their personality development and to (their) transactions in the world outside their 'family constellation'. 'In the family each child develops his frame of reference through which (they) perceive, interpret and evaluate the world.' (Dreikurs et al 1982 p 57). Family *constellation* refers (in this sense) to the relationship between birth order, sibling relationships and parental relationships within this 'constellation'. According to Adler (and Dreikurs) 'In the life pattern of every child there is the imprint of (their) position in the family which has definite characteristics ... the child's subjective impression of his place within the family constellation.' (Ibid)

While teachers are sometimes aware of some of these tensions (between siblings in the same school – for example) we do not always have the time to set up family meetings to work with parents on shared understandings (however desirable such an aim might be). Obviously we will have informal and formal meetings with parents to address behaviour concerns and work constructively for parental understanding and support. Sometimes *some* parents also present with very demanding and challenging behaviours in parent-teacher meetings (we can often see the ‘behaviour overlap’ between parent and student). It takes some conscious skill to keep meetings (with such parents) calm and solution focused!* While schools will always seek to work constructively and supportively with parents, our primary emphasis (even with awareness of some family dynamics) is always to work with the student in *the one setting where we can directly affect and support behaviour change – the school*. Adler warns against simplistic notions of character being *only, or merely*, inherited from parents.

‘The concept that character and personality are inherited from one’s parents is universally harmful because it hinders the educator in his task and cramps his confidence. The real reason for assuming that character is inherited lies elsewhere. This evasion enables anyone who has the task of education to escape his responsibilities by the simple gesture of blaming heredity for the pupil’s failures. This, of course, is quite contrary to the purpose of education.’ (Adler, 1927, p 31).

A case study

A year 7 class. I’m teaching SOSE (Studies of Society and Environment); it’s whole class teaching time. There are some quite boisterous students but – by and large – the discussion is going well. I’ve reminded the class about the fair rule for class discussion time (see below). “It’s hands up, thanks – without calling out or finger clicking *so we all get a fair go.*”

We had a positive rule poster on the whiteboard (the visual aide memoir) :-

*See Rogers *How To Manage Children’s Challenging Behaviour* (2nd Edition) chapter 7.

We all have a right to learn

To learn well here we remember to :

- get to class on time,
- have our relevant materials,
- put our hand up (without calling out) **so we all get a fair go in class discussion.**

[There were a few other points noted on the poster. I indicate this much (above) to underscore the note on 'fair go' in class discussion. See Rogers, 2015(b)]. This school also has a school-wide commitment, in policy and practice, to positive discipline.

Jayden calls out, "Mr Rogers, Mr Rogers!". He had his hand up, clicking his fingers, clearly drawing class attention to himself, and to the teacher – effectively saying, 'I'm here! C'mon notice *me* before you notice the others with their hand up!'

Initially I *tactically* ignored his calling out, focusing on the students who had their hands up (without calling out or finger clicking) – *the 'fair go' ...*

Jayden started again, "Mr Rogers, C'mon ...!" His tone was sulky, 'pushy'; he was leaning back in his seat with an overly frowning face. We might think this is attentional behaviour, which of course it is. However, when I reminded him of *our* class rule,⁴ "Jayden (...)* remember our rule for class discussions. Fair go for all." He then sighed (oh so loudly) saying "I had my hand up! C'mon can't I even ask a question!?" I *briefly* acknowledged and refocused, "Of course you can ask questions. In our class though, it's hands up without calling out. Fair go."

I didn't want a pointless *discussion* about 'fairness', or his 'motives'. I refocused my attention *back to the whole class group and the students who wanted to continue our class discussion*. He then kicked the leg of his class table, calling out loudly, "Can't say nothing here!" again with a loud, and indulgent sigh. He leaned back in his seat arms folded, looking around at several class mates as if to say, "He (the teacher) can't make me behave like he says I should! I can – effectively – do what I want and he can't really make me ...!"

* I paused (...) to give *brief* take-up-time and focus. (Rogers, 2011)

This is attention-seeking behaviour and is now moving into a power-seeking; his goal is power ('I can do what I want and you can't stop me ...').

nb The sorts of classroom skills that address challenging, attentional and power-seeking behaviours at the classroom level are not addressed at length in this paper. There are essential practices and skills that can enable us to more helpfully address such behaviours *within the dynamic setting of a classroom group*. Behaviour of challenging students *in group settings* is always different than when we speak with particularly challenging students one-to-one, away from their class peers. One of the more annoying comments by *some* senior teachers (when we sometimes need to direct a very difficult or aggressive student from the classroom for time-out) is the comment (later) that, "Oh, he's fine for me. I have no trouble with him ..." Of course our colleague has 'no trouble with the student' when he's got an audience of one – and an adult generally prepared to listen, tolerate, understand ... When that same student is back in the classroom (however) with their 'audience of peers', the student's sense of 'inferiority' and compensating behaviour is seen as they seek *to belong* through their attentional or power-seeking behaviours.

For a detailed discussion of practices and skills to constructively address attentional and confronting behaviours in challenging primary and secondary settings see : Rogers (2011), (2015) and Rogers and McPherson (2014). The practices and skills are (there) set out in case study settings drawn from the author's work as a mentor-coach in schools.

Recognising the child's behaviour goal

'The striving for a goal, the purposiveness of the psychic life is not only a philosophic assumption, but actually a fundamental fact.' (Adler, 1927, p 68).

"I'm *too* tired – *alright!?*" The student refuses to do the classwork (work he is able to do) as he leans back – arms folded – in his seat; sighing loudly and frowning. It is essential (in this example) to distinguish between a student who naturally struggles with their work, a student having a 'bad-day' and the student who is 'determinedly', frequently and (at times) calculatingly task-avoiding or task refusing. (See the case-study of Scott, later in this paper ... pp 31-34).

The student's tone of voice and manner indicate that this behaviour is more than incidental task avoidance, bad-day syndrome or laziness; the student is engaging in a minor power-struggle. This is more than the student saying 'Notice me'; the student is effectively saying, "*I want to do what I want and you can't really make me do the work now. I can do what I want and you can't really stop me...*"

All children get tired, have bad days; this pattern of behaviour is different.

Dreikurs has argued that our 'gut reaction' – in such cases – is often a reliable indicator in recognizing key aspects of the child's behaviour goal. He also noted that the way in which a student responds to a teacher's management and discipline is another strong indicator regarding the child's behaviour goal. Our natural emotional reaction is to feel frustrated, even angry at times when students *overly, and frequently*, demand our attention or seek to engage us in power struggles. This issue is addressed later.

For example if a student is, say, frequently calling out during whole class teaching time and we discipline him (hopefully briefly and respectfully) the student's response (their behaviour) will indicate their 'goal'. Sean (year 7) is calling out ... The teacher reminds him :

"Sean, remember our class rule for asking questions ..." or "Hands up thanks without calling out ...". In response to the rule reminder, from his teacher, he sighs and raises his eyes. A little later he calls out again (with his hand up as if – now – 'obeying' the class rule ...). The teacher – again – reminds him about the class rule and the student immediately challenges, "But I had my hand up alright!" The student's refusal to co-operate and the teacher's belief that he needs to 'force', to 'compel' the student to co-operate is a very strong indication that the student is seeking social

power, not only attention*.

Where the student is continuing to call out with his hand up and clicking his fingers, often with attentional body language [the overly loud sigh, the frown, the rolling of the eyes-to-ceiling, the sulking or confronting last word] is another typical example of the student's 'goal' of seeking power.

Private logic' and mistaken goals (of behaviour)

'Educability may be shattered by two factors. One of these factors is an exaggerated, intensified, unresolved feeling of inferiority, and the other is a goal which demands not only security and peace and social equilibrium, but a striving to express power over the environment, a goal of dominance over one's fellows. Children who have such a goal are always easily recognised. They become 'problem' children because they interpret every experience as a defeat, and because they consider themselves always neglected and discriminated against both by nature and man.' (Adler, 1927, p 66).

Adler and Dreikurs argued that human beings are biased in their perception of the world around them. As they seek to find their place – their 'social belonging' – they make evaluations of situations and relationships from that primary social need and utilising their developing 'private logic' to come to terms with their social reality. *Private logic* is a term Dreikurs uses to focus on what he call biased perceptions (of how to belong ...).

"Private logic or private intelligence is a 'mistaken reason' (sic) in which an individual solves his problems in a 'private sense' ... An individual's private logic consists of what he *really* believes and intends ... (it) involves a process, beginning in childhood, by which a person explains his experience to himself with varying degrees of insight and by which he produces and justifies his behaviour." (Dreikurs, 1982, et al) (pp 27/28).

* The issue of 'force' or 'compelling' in discipline transactions is addressed later on p 34 and at length in the case studies in the books noted on p 10 and p 20.

Dreikurs notes that the child is not always aware of his goals. “However the child recognises the purpose of his behaviour when we disclose his goals to him.” (Ibid p 28) see later pp 19-22, and pp 26/27 in this paper.

A child’s ‘mistaken goals’ are *characteristically* expressed in patterns of attentional and power-seeking behaviours arising from faulty self-evaluations where a child believes he can only really belong when he gains attention or power (from teachers or peers) in maladaptive ways. In this sense the student is not *only*, or *merely*, behaving badly; his behaviour is *purposeful* – even though such behaviours are (at times) negative, extreme, maladaptive, disturbing and (at times) dysfunctional.

A child’s mistaken goals (through their behaviour) obviously create significant social tension and stress for other students and frustration and stress for teachers as they seek to work with such children. Yet the awareness of these goals and reflection on how we can address such behaviour in the public forum of the classroom (as well as one-to-one with the student) can enable us to manage that stress more constructively.

The mistaken goals (of behaviour)

Dreikurs identified what he called ‘mistaken goals’ – in children’s behaviours – expressed in the child seeking :

- to gain *undue* attention (emphasis mine)
- to seek power (negative and confronting power)
- to seek revenge or ‘get even’
- to display inadequacy (real or assumed).

It is not merely the gaining of attention or seeking of power (as such), it is the *frequent* and *characteristic* gaining of *negative* attention and *confronting, manipulative and destructive* power that characterises the sorts of distracting and disruptive behaviours that create significant concerns, and stress, for teachers and the student’s peers in the social context of the classroom.

nb

There is, of course, nothing 'wrong' in wanting, and seeking, attention or social power; inclusive attention and positive social power can be constructive and purposeful. What Dreikurs refers to is the *inappropriate and maladaptive* expressions of attention and power in a student's behaviour. It is these behaviours that significantly distract and disrupt workable and co-operative social behaviours and work against a positive learning and social environment for the individual student (in question) as well as their peers.

For example when a child is *frequently* showing off in class, or clowning around; is seemingly a 'constant' nuisance, or *repeatedly* lazy (when we know he is able to do the work), we (naturally) feel annoyed, or frustrated because of the time it takes to keep addressing such behaviours. When a child is *overly* 'eager to please', who displays *overly* (and attentively) sensitive behaviours, teachers also get resentful – again because of the time it takes to address *frequent* attentional demands (be they active or 'passive' in expression). In this case, the child may well be saying, "*I only belong when I keep my teacher in constant service to me; when they help me all the time ...*"

When a child is very stubborn, argues frequently; wants to be 'the boss', to win and frequently does the opposite of what is asked or directed eg : blatantly refuses to do classwork, clean up their mess, is frequently deceptive and lying ... There is a 'purpose' 'behind' such behaviours; the goal of power. "I can do what I want and no-one can really make me do what I don't want to do; I am the 'boss' here ..."

Teachers often feel threatened, even defeated, at times in their leadership when they come up against such behaviours. Some teachers feel they must retaliate and 'force' the child to obey. Our feelings, in relationship to such behaviours, are a signal clue to the child's behaviour goal.

There is more than frustration present here when we have to address such behaviours – there is anger as some teachers determine not to 'let the student get away with it', or appear to 'win'. This is understandable; as well as our concern for the effect of such behaviour on other students teachers are also concerned with how other teachers will perceive their leadership, their management, their discipline. The dilemma for us (as teachers) is that we cannot ignore such behaviours; we have to attend to, and address, such behaviours when they clearly affect the rights

of other students to learn, to feel safe, to be treated with respect. Yet when we easily ‘over-service’ attentional behaviours and seek to confront, coerce – and win – with power-seeking students we only reinforce their mistaken (behaviour) goals. (See, eg, p 31f, p 34f). This is both a natural dilemma and a challenge in our role as teacher-leader.

Goals of behaviour

Attention-seeking behaviours (Notice ME)

nb It is the *frequency*, *durability* (more than ‘bad-day syndrome’) and the *generality* of these behaviours that cause significant concern for teachers (and fellow students).

<i>acting out behaviours</i>	<i>‘passive’ behaviours</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – ‘clowning’ ... – nuisance ... show off – ‘smart alecky’ – over-servicing ... of teacher (by persistent demands for ‘help’) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – self-indulgent ... – <i>overly/overtly</i> ‘nice’ – <i>overly</i> eager to please – <i>too</i> tired ... – <i>too</i> shy ... – <i>too</i> lazy
<p>In more extreme cases this can correlate with Narcissistic spectrum / self-aggrandising behaviours. See extended appendix.</p>	<p>All these are expressions of behaviour where the child is effectively saying ‘I belong when I put my teacher in frequent service to me ...’</p>

These sorts of behaviours are the student’s ‘goal’ of being noticed (notice ME!); in this way the student is seeking to ‘belong’ (according to their ‘private logic’).

‘The exaggerated drive for power with which some children wish to assure their prestige over their environment, soon forces them into an attitude of resistance against the ordinary tasks and duties of everyday life.’ (Adler, Op. Cit. p 68).

Power-seeking behaviours (an extension of attention-seeking attitude and behaviour ...) – ‘Make me ...’

Again, it is the *frequency* and *durability* and *generality* of such behaviours that create problems, struggle and conflict...

<i>acting out behaviours</i>	<i>‘passive’ behaviours</i>
<p>frequent ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – defiance ... ‘can’t make me!’ – arguing ... ‘why should !!!?’ – contradicting ... – temper tantrums... – Does opposite of what is asked of him ... – can be untruthful / lying – (certainly unco-operative) ... rebelling ... – must win and be in control of every situation ... <p>nb. Some features of autistic spectrum disorder can present within the behaviours noted here. In ASD behaviours however, we distinguish between behaviour patterns ‘in the disorder’ and what we note in non-ASD diagnoses. Our awareness of typical features of ASD will enable us to determine the difference between what may be termed <i>goal-directed</i> and ‘typical features’ of ASD.</p>	<p>frequent ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – stubborn in the pushy and resistive ‘why’ (!); often challenging and confrontive ‘whys’. – ‘Why’ should !!? – ‘Why’ can’t !!? – Apathetic about work, ‘joining in’. The ‘apathy’ (here) is avoidance and ‘passively’ resistive (not because the student doesn’t understand what is ‘fair’ or necessary). Dawdling ... present as resistive “Do I have to!!”; “Why should I?”; “It’s not fair!” – ‘I forgot!’ – feeling frequently ‘tired’ – refusing to work when they can do it ...

Narcissistic behaviours correlate, too, with power seeking and – in Adlerian terms – the superiority complex (see extended appendix). Bullying is a also typical expression of ‘social’ power : the desire/intent to hurt and control others.

Dreikurs identifies two other ‘mistaken’ goals : *revenge (seeking)* and *displays of inadequacy*.

- **Revenge behaviours** are evident where a child :
 - accuses others, particularly adults – often – of unfairness, believing (or accusing) that *no one* likes them ...
 - may steal, lie about their own (or others’) behaviour.
 - display nasty or vicious behaviours,
 - may be destructive, as a way of ‘getting even’ for perceived hurt ...

Teachers may – naturally – feel hurt (particularly by distortions, lies and nasty, even vicious, behaviours). It is not easy to show continued respect in our working relationships with such students when on the one hand we have to discipline children who behave in these ways, yet also seek to help and support them.

- **Inadequacy behaviours** are observed when :
 - a child frequently displays helpless behaviours, and displays inadequacy in their frequent self-comparison to others. This is tragically exacerbated by parents who openly or manipulatively compare siblings in this way. Sadly some (I stress *some*) teachers do compare student’s intelligence and ability and ‘effort’ in harmful even hurtful ways. This is – of course – unprofessional and must be challenged where we know it exists. Students who display such inadequacy :-
 - give up easily, quickly; do not participate in activities,
 - frequently want to be left alone; not to have any demands made upon them,
 - may set (far) too high goals for themselves and resist any task/activity that they believe does not measure up to their perceived (and high) self-expectations.

Teachers often feel both exasperated and discouraged, even ‘incapable’ as they seek to teach and offer help/support to such children; some teachers even give up trying to help.

Goal-directed behaviour

When Dreikurs talks about ‘goal-directed’ behaviour, such as negative attention or power, it doesn’t mean the child is always aware of their ‘goal’; this is certainly so in very young children.

The attentional or power-seeking behaviours are the ‘ways and means in which each child has discovered his expression to gain status and significance’ (Dreikurs, Op. Cit., p 2). Such behaviours are ‘purposive’; the child is a ‘*social being* and (he) wants to find ‘his place’ at home, in school, in the world’. (Dreikurs *ibid*) ‘The child’s interest in belonging exists from the outset’ (*Ibid* p 8). They ‘know’ what their behaviour is ‘achieving’ (and this is a feature of their ‘private logic’ of course) – they will not always be able to articulate this in ‘cause/effect’ terms. A ‘goal-disclosure discussion’ can help a child to be aware of his ‘goal’ (see later p 19f in these notes).

This understanding about how children seek and strive for their sense of ‘social place’ and ‘belonging’ is a crucial insight into understanding the behaviour motivations of children in classroom contexts.

As noted earlier, it is through this *seeking* – this natural developmental *striving to belong* – that children find their ‘ways of belonging’. In the parental and school dynamic, children – naturally – seek approval, attention, security, esteem. Some children, however, through their family experiences miscue and ‘overestimate’ the importance of *overly frequent* parent approval. Some children have learned that the only way to have ‘status’ and ‘belonging’ is to exhibit *frequent* attentional behaviours that ‘force’ their parents to attend to them and *notice* them when they demand such attention/noticing through such behaviours as frequent tantrums [even in adolescents!], *persistent* sulking, *forcing* sibling arguments ... Sometimes children seek to ‘belong’ by exercising their power to control or manipulate others, or situations where they have to feel they *must* ‘win’, or *always* have their own way.

As teachers we’ve all worked with children who ‘want to be right all the time ...’; ‘who *frequently* overreact to any sense of failure or mistake’; ‘who are *overly* sensitive and try to get others (particularly the teacher) to do things for them, to make decisions for them. Even this behaviour – when it is *characteristic* – can be a form of overcompensation for a feelings of inferiority (‘I only *really* belong when I can get the teacher to service my need for attention’). In its less extreme expression this is often a child’s need for reassurance and encouragement (see later pp 41-46). A typical classroom example (p 8f) is the acting-out attentional student who frequently calls out, (loudly), in whole-class teaching time, or talks over or calls out over others who are contributing to whole-class discussions ... (“I know!!”, “Miss!!”, “Miss c’mon! – I know!”) calling out repeatedly until they get what they want. Or the student who *frequently* refuses to cooperate, who manipulates others (or the teacher) if they can’t get their own way ...

Of course ‘within’ these sorts of attentional and power-seeking behaviours there are personality factors as well as family modelling, parenting and discipline factors that affect the child’s social perception. However, children – *when they are at school – still have to come to terms with how they believe they ‘belong’; how they perceive they ‘fit in’ with others in that daily social dynamic.* Where we see very frequent attentionally distracting and disruptive patterns of behaviour in classrooms, and power-seeking patterns of behaviour, Dreikurs argues that :

‘It is not the cause but the purpose of the goal that explains such behaviour. Behaviour makes sense only when we understand its purpose. The goal of behaviour itself, is the cause.’

Whether the child is aware of the ‘goal’ or not, the *child’s behaviour* is indicating the ‘ways and means by which (he) tries to be significant.’ (Op. Cit. p 10).

As Adler has said, “The basis of educability lies in the striving of the child to compensate for his weaknesses.” (1927, p 40)

A significant sense of ‘inferiority’ (the inferiority complex) affects a child’s sense of belonging, often leading to ‘compensatory behaviours’. These *behaviours* are the child’s ‘mistaken’ means of trying to belong. While we obviously have to address such behaviours (when they affect the rights of others in the classroom) this insight – about social belonging – can enable us to discipline in a way that minimises unnecessary attention and power-conflict within group contexts.* These insights are particularly helpful when we are working with the student one-to-one to enable their understanding and support behaviour change (see p 20f/p 26f).

Goal disclosure through discussion with the child one-to-one : key questions

‘Goal disclosure’ is a particular questioning/counselling approach developed by Rudolf Dreikurs to enable a child to be aware of – and begin to understand the motivations of – their distracting, disruptive and maladaptive behaviours. We ask such questions (see below) to raise the student’s self-awareness about their *motivating ‘goal’* expressed in their characteristic maladaptive behaviours we have observed in group settings.

* Again, the practices and skills to enable constructive and respectful discipline (in group contexts) are addressed in detail Rogers, 2011. See the earlier note on p: 10.

This approach to *behaviour self-awareness and self-reflection* will obviously work most effectively when the adult – in discussion with the student – is aware of the students' *characteristic* behaviour (in group contexts) and has a generally positive working relationship with the student. When asking any of these questions (see over) it is important that our tone and manner be supportive; as if we're making a calculated 'guess' (as it were). We should avoid any hint of 'I'm going to prove something to you now (!) ...'; 'I'm going to tell you why I think you show off ...' or 'I know why you're so rude to me, so arrogant ...'

'Goal disclosure' is *not another technique* for trying to manage or control student behaviour. It should never be used to manipulate the student.

These questions are developed in **one-to-one meetings with the student**. We consciously observe the normative protocols of any one-to-one meetings with a minor and the ethical probity essential to such contexts, (see Rogers 2003 *Behaviour Recovery*. 2nd edition / Australian Council for Educational Research. In the UK : Sage Publications (London).)

The student's goal is presented as a 'guess' by the teacher/counsellor, (not a *mere* guess, a well-informed 'guess'). ie :- "could it be (that) eg : when you call out lots of times in class?", followed by a reference to the specific goal (see below). The following question formats are slightly adapted from Dreikurs et al 1982.

Always preface each question with the student's name and a reference to the behaviour of concern.

Attention – *Could it be that ...*

You want to keep me busy with you?

You want me to do more for you? – that you want *special* attention?

You want me to notice you more?

- You want your classmates to *look at you and notice you when you ...* (here briefly refer, again – specifically – to the student's attentional behaviour we have frequently observed in class settings).
- You want me to do something special for you?
- You want to be *really* special in the group? You think that when you do ... (here be specific about the attentional behaviour) ... then you'll be 'more special' (?)

– You want me to help you more?

Power – *Could it be that ...*

You want to be the boss, be in charge? – you want (to have) your own way?

You want to show me that you can do what you want and :

- that I cannot stop you when you ... (here, again, be *specific* about the power-seeking *behaviour* ...)?
- that I cannot make you ... (here, again, be *specific* about the power-seeking *behaviour* ...)?

You want to do

- what you want to do?
- when you want to do it?
- “Could it be that you feel that you can make it so I really don’t know what to do with you?, and for older children :- “... that I really feel helpless when you ...?”

This is particularly so with the student who will refuse to talk, even in one-to-one behaviour discussions. A helpful question for older children here is, “Could it be that you’re not talking – *now* – to make me feel defeated? – helpless?”.

After having ‘hypothesized’ the student’s goal, allow some brief silence to watch for the ‘recognition reflex’ (see p 24). If the student says either ‘No’ or ‘Maybe’ – but we see a clear *recognition reflex* – it can be helpful to add “I thought so ...”, or “That’s what I was thinking ...”

Revenge – With suspected ‘revenge goals’ we need to be clear about what the ‘trigger’ for revenge was before pursuing any of these questions. As always, a brief refocus to the revenge *behaviour(s)* is essential to focus the question.

Could it be that :

You want to punish me? (as a result of ...)

You want to get even? Get back at _____?

You want to hurt me (or him, her, us?)

You want to make me feel bad? You want to show me how it feels because of ...?

You want to make me suffer? You want to hurt me and the pupils in the class?

You want to show me that I (we, him, her, them, us ...) cannot get away with that? (the behaviour/issue that we believe may have triggered their revenge ...)

Display of Inadequacy (Withdrawal) – Could it be that :-

You want to be left alone because :

- you feel you cannot really do anything?
- you are afraid to fail?
- you can't be 'on top', 'first', 'the winner'?

You want me to stop asking you to do i.e. the class work ... or 'join -in' ...? 'because ...'

- "Could it be that you do not feel significant unless you're the best in what you do?" or " ... unless everybody likes you?" or " ... unless you can do better than ...?"
- "Could it be you always want to be right...? To be the first ... at/when ...?"

Dreikurs contends that in the process of questioning we ask 'in sequence' (as it were) beginning with the questions addressing attention and moving on from there.

This is not an approach to rush; adequate time needs to be given – in this one-to-one session – to pursue the questions and to give some response to their 'recognition' by the student.

Dreikurs argues that this can form the beginning of a working relationship in which the child can receive help in changing some of his mistaken ideas about how they seek 'to belong'.

Revisiting characteristic behaviour patterns with the student (one-to-one)

Before asking any of the *goal disclosure questions*, it can help to revisit the student's attentional or power-seeking behaviours, by discussion, simple drawings or even brief behaviour mirroring (see later pp 25-26).

I find it helpful with primary aged children to also use a simple drawing (even 'stick figures') portraying their typical and frequent distracting/disruptive behaviour. These simple (A4) drawings portray the class teacher and several students (in the background) with a sad/upset looking face (to indicate social upsettedness/disapproval as it were), the teacher and other students portrayed as 'looking-on' in the picture.

We use such drawings to raise the child's awareness relating to *characteristic* aspects of their attentional or power-seeking behaviours. We ask such questions as 'Who do you think this is in the picture?', 'What are you doing in the picture...?' A drawing of the child's teacher and class

peers ... the drawing illustrates the teacher and fellow students looking upset at the child's disruptive behaviour. 'What can you tell me about the faces of the students ...? About your teacher ...? This kind of drawing acts as a 'social story' to enable behaviour awareness and subsequent reflective communication. (See Rogers, 2003, *Behaviour Recovery* and Rogers and McPherson, 2014 *Behaviour Management With Young Children*).

We then (later) develop a behaviour support plan, with the student, using another drawing that represents the child behaving appropriately (co-operatively) with the teacher and the student's peers displaying a positive social approval (smiles from teacher/students alike in the drawing ...).

Dreikurs cautions us that in using goal disclosure approaches :-

"We must be careful not to confront the child with an accusation such as 'You do it to get attention', because the child will resent this and deny it. '*Could it be ...*' is not an accusation; it is only a guess that may be correct or incorrect. If it is incorrect we should guess again."

"There is no harm in guessing since if you guess incorrectly, it is merely shrugged off. In the moment that you guess correctly the child feels understood." (Op. Cit. p 31f).

If the child says 'No' to the 'guess'⁵ we make another 'guess'. I stress again, the key to this questioning approach is its constructive possibility to raise *behaviour awareness* in the student; it's as if we are saying 'You now know that I know you know ...' This, in itself, is useful in the teacher-student relationship. Not in any superior knowledge sense but in our *genuine attempt to share what we think the student's goal/purpose is* (behind their attentional/challenging behaviour). Our tone needs to be confidently and respectfully calm – no 'pleading' or trying to make the student to feel guilty.

Dreikurs repeatedly notes that the teacher needs to know the child in order to pursue this approach, and then to help the child to find constructive ways of finding a positive sense of social belonging.

Dreikurs points out that if the child says 'Maybe' to our guess, then we are 'getting close' (Ibid p 31). Some children will say 'Yes', almost compulsively, when we disclose their goal. However, the most common/typical response to such questions (p 19f) is the *recognition reflex*. Dreikurs notes that, "the recognition reflex and the teacher's own reaction to the child's misbehaviour are the best guides to an understanding of the child's goal." (Ibid.)

The recognition reflex

This refers to the typical sorts of responses a child/young person makes to the sorts of questions (p 19f) that the teacher/counsellor uses to raise awareness of the child's probable behaviour goal. This 'recognition reflex' is often non-verbal : the 'knowing' smile, the quirky look, the eyes looking up and away (as it were), the twitching mouth, the over-tapping of fingers, the over adjustment of their seating. As Dreikurs et al (1982) notes, " ... they give themselves away (sic) through some facial or bodily mannerism that we term the *recognition reflex*. This recognition reflex usually expresses itself through a smile, a grin, an embarrassed laughter or a twinkle in the eye ..." (p28).

I recently had such a chat with a very bright grade two student about his 'acting out' in the classroom; aggressive behaviour of kicking furniture and refusing to come when his teacher called him over (for example) in classtime. She had explained he had 'temper and anger issues' ... When I chatted with him one-to-one (away from his class peers) I talked with him about the throwing of things in class, the kicking of the classroom wall, the rough pushing and – at times – kicking of the furniture and – sometimes – running out of the classroom ... We had noticed that when he couldn't 'get his own way' (as his teacher termed it), he would aggress by slamming down his books, kicking at his chair and walking away defiantly from his teacher.

I then asked some questions about attention and power. Initially I asked if he knew 'why' he behaved like that He frowned and shrugged his shoulders. I then asked, specifically, "Could it be that when you (here I referred to the throwing ... the kicking) you are trying to show your teacher – and me – that you can do what you want and we can't stop you ...?" He looked up and away, then smirked and grinned. He didn't say 'yes' or 'no' (in response to the questions); his body language signals had indicated where the question had struck a clear self-awareness 'chord' as it were.

My colleagues and I would never ever say a student is bad (in any way) for having angry feelings. Anger (itself) is neither good or bad, it is a feeling, an emotion. It is how we learn to react/respond *when* we feel frustration and anger that is important in social contexts. As adults we know – too well – how intense such feelings can be, and (therefore) how hard it is for young children to learn to constructively express and communicate how they feel. However, what we characteristically

think and do (our behaviour) when we have such feelings is part of a child's learning. As teachers we try to help our students be more self-aware of what goes on – in one's body and behaviour – *when* we're very frustrated or angry and to work with the student to develop more constructive ways of dealing with such emotions in relationship to others. (See notes : *Anger and Aggression at School*, Rogers, 2017).

We often develop personal behaviour plans with the student (one-to-one) to teach self-awareness skills and ways to communicate frustration and anger without resorting to reactive aggression.

These skills can be learned, even with young children. (See Rogers, 2003 and 2009 and Rogers and McPherson 2014).

This 'goal disclosure' (with the student noted above) was a helpful starting point as part of the process where we were able to teach this young child better ways to understand, communicate and manage his feelings of frustration, anger (and temper) in non-destructive ways.

Behaviour mirroring (Rogers, 2003, Rogers and McPherson, 2014)

On occasion we also use *behaviour mirroring* as part of the one-to-one counselling sessions, and – then – move on to the goal-disclosure questions noted earlier.

We ask the student if we can show them 'what it looks like *when ...*' (?) Eg :- When they 'push in line', or 'run off when we're lining up to come into class ...' or 'call out lots of times when we're on the mat during whole-class teaching time ...' or 'refusing to sit in your table group' or ... With older children, we'll often ask :- 'Can I give you a demo ...? To show you what I mean by calling out lots of time when I'm teaching the class ...?' 'I'd like to show you *how* you were speaking to me in class *when ...*' (ie : their very disrespectful tone of voice ...). 'Do you mind if I show you what I mean by *the way* you come into class late ...?' We ask such a question respectfully (never provocatively). In effect we ask their 'permission' if we can 'show them' what their frequent disruptive behaviour looks and sounds like ... We do this out of respect and courtesy (with a child/student at any age ...).

Behaviour mirroring is another way of raising a student's behaviour self-awareness; kinaesthetically. This should never be carried out in a manner that is disrespectful, or 'out-to-prove' something (I'll show how stupid/annoying your behaviour looks!). We would not normally use this approach with children diagnosed within the autistic spectrum or any children who we

believe may miscue or be unnecessarily emotionally distressed by *briefly* 'showing' them what their behaviour looks/sounds like when ...

When we ask a student if we can show them what we often see in their behaviour in class ... (here we *briefly, and specifically*, refer to their attentional or power-seeking behaviours) some students will be naturally hesitant. 'What?' – 'What do you mean *show me?*' With older primary/secondary students I often ask 'Can I give you a quick demo to show you what I've often seen you do when ...?'

If they say 'No', (this is the exception) obviously we *verbally describe* their behaviour. *Brief* behaviour mirroring – however – can raise a student's kinaesthetic awareness, and memory (from our brief acting out ...). They can 'see' and 'feel' (in a sense) what their typical attentional/power-seeking behaviour 'looks' and 'sounds' like.

Less than ten seconds is often enough to raise that behaviour/kinaesthetic awareness. We then physically step away from the 'recreation of their behaviour' (as it were) and say something like, "*That's what it looks/or sounds like when you ...*"

Most students (and it's mostly boys in such cases) grin or laugh when they see us (as their teacher) briefly being 'the disruptive them' (!) The laughter may be 'anxious' laughter, even embarrassed laughter but it's mostly natural laughter as we *very briefly* 'become them'. This, too, is helpful in their behaviour awareness.

Summary of keys steps in 'goal-disclosure'

Basic 'steps' in the one-to-one discussion using 'goal disclosure' questions :-

- *Raise behaviour awareness* by 're-visiting' the *frequent* distracting / disruptive behaviours. Behaviour mirroring and brief 'picture cues' can assist here (always observe the protocols of 'mirroring' a student's behaviour (p 25f).
- *Use the above as the starting point for self-awareness* then ask :-
"Do you know why you ...?" (be briefly specific; directing the student's focus to the distracting/disruptive behaviour(s) revisited). This 'why' question is designed to trigger the student's initial behaviour self-awareness. Allow a little time for the student to respond. A

‘tactical silence’ can even be constructive here. Most students (as noted) shrug their shoulders or indicate by facial/bodily expressions that they don’t know ‘why’ ...

- *We then ‘suggest’ why we think they frequently behave that way ...*
“**Could it be that ...?/I think that ...**”; we then add the ‘suggested’ goal/‘reason’ for their behaviour ... (in a respectful questioning tone) and then add the ‘suggested’ goal/reason for their behaviour.
- *Allow take-up time* – even a brief ‘tactical silence’ – to enable the ‘disclosure’ to ‘sink in’ ...
- If a student says ‘No’ or, ‘Not really’ (in response to our ‘disclosure’), we move on to the next ‘goal-disclosure’. For example, we might start with a disclosure about attention and get no clear response. We then move on to disclosure about ‘power’ to see if the student ‘connects’. This is where we look for the recognition reflex (p 24). As noted, it can be helpful to allow a brief ‘tactical’ silence here (on the teacher/counsellor’s part) and then add, “I thought so ...”, eg “I thought that’s why you refused to ...” (here a *brief* reference about the behaviour under discussion).

Again – it is important to stress our tone needs to be respectful and ‘invitational’ when we say : ‘I thought so ...’.

- Having ‘disclosed’ the ‘goal’ we can now talk with the student about constructive and co-operative ways of enjoying/having social/relational attention/power within classroom/school life. We do not, necessarily, use the terms of attention/power per se. but refer to patterns of positive behaviour that affirm *co-operative attention and power*.
- This discussion will often focus on the need to work with the student on a *behaviour support plan* so that the student can learn to co-operate (positive attention and power) without having to resort to distracting / disruptive behaviours. [For a detailed discussion on how such individual support plans can be developed. See Rogers, 2003 and 2006 (ch 7)].

Of course we can’t make the student co-operate with any such ‘plan’, particularly with established patterns of attention and power. The key is always to work *with* the student and not re-engage in yet another power-struggle. The student will, of course, need to know that the school’s behaviour consequences will continue if they *continue* to behave in the ways (maladaptive behaviours) noted; however a plan can always change things for the better – ‘the door is always open ...’.

Individual behaviour plans

When we develop such individual behaviour plans we will need to set aside some *dedicated one-to-one time* for the student (at any age) outside of class time. Such plans involve the grade teacher (at primary level) or a senior teacher (at secondary level) *working directly with the student* to teach those ‘academic survival behaviours’, or ‘social survival behaviours’, the student needs to develop if he is going to cope with social relationships and the natural requirements and ‘demands’ of day-to-day teaching/learning.

This kind of behaviour support is to be distinguished from informal (or formal) counselling, or welfare support, or social worker support; important as those support options are. At secondary level, an individual behaviour plan is normally developed by a key senior teacher (with skills in this area of behaviour support)⁶. Their role is to work with the student to *teach* behaviour in a supportive one-to-one context (with the student) using picture cues/ modelling/ role play/immediate learning feedback. The use of ‘goal disclosure questions’ is often utilised in the first meeting between the student and their ‘case supervisor’ (who works with the student one-to-one on their behaviour plan).

These kind of *individual behaviour plans* involve ‘withdrawing’ the child/student from class(es) for one-to-one behaviour support sessions. They are a labour intensive approach to giving support to our most at-risk students but it is often time well spent. That individual behaviour plan is then communicated to each teacher (and support teacher) in the teaching team who works with that student in *any* classroom context (this includes the crucial role of teacher aides and integration aides).

It is also essential that each teacher who works with any student, within such *individual* plans, be willing to support the student back in class time with thoughtful encouragement (p 41f), positive correction and (where necessary) appropriate use of time-out. (See later).

Where *any* time-out is used as a behaviour consequence, it is essential that the teacher who initiates the time-out consequence will also follow up and follow-through with that student later (one-to-one). This is particularly important at secondary level. Such follow-up may need senior teacher support at times but *the key role of follow up, and repairing and rebuilding, should be undertaken by the initiating teacher* (who directed the student – initially – to time-out).

Other areas Dreikurs develops to support children with mistaken goals :-

Dreikurs emphasises the importance of non-controlling, non-coercive forms of discipline in *group contexts*. When we have to give *any* attention – when we address distracting and disruptive behaviours in classtime – we need to be consciously aware of how we give such attention by what we say and do, always aware that any behaviour transaction is – in effect – a ‘social transaction’ (Rogers, 2011, see also Rogers, 2015). There is always an ‘audience’.

In the discipline approaches (discussed in Rogers 2011, 2014 and 2015), I have also argued for thoughtful and skilled use of *tactical* ignoring, and *selective* attention, in discipline exchanges. This behaviour leadership skill is one of the most demanding in terms of its context dependency. It is particularly powerful when, for example, we address a student’s distracting/disruptive behaviour and they respond with attentional behaviours such as a loud sigh, an overdone frown, the overly sibilant mutter, the loud ‘tsk tsk’, the eyes rolling and raised to the ceiling, the averted eyes, the sulky pout, the muttered last word ...

I have called such behaviours ‘secondary behaviours’ (Rogers, 2011, 2014 and 2015), in that when we address the *primary* distracting/disruptive behaviour the student responds with ‘*secondary* behaviours’ (the indulgent sigh, the visibly loud pout, the rolling of eyes etc ...). Such behaviour is – often – an *extension* of a student’s attentional or power-seeking stance and ‘goal’. The balance of *tactical* ignoring and *selective* attention is, in my view, an essential feature of behaviour leadership and discipline in *group contexts* when addressing such ‘secondary behaviours’. I stress *group contexts*, because it is within the group that the ‘theatre’ of attention and power are played out by some students. We obviously should never ignore *any* hostile or aggressive behaviours (verbal or physical), or any *repeatedly* distracting, disruptive behaviours or *any* direct swearing or abusive or threatening language. *Tactical* ignoring is effective when we address the sulks, the pouts, the sighs, the passive task avoidance (etc) *that follow from* us verbally addressing the student’s ‘primary’ distracting/disruptive behaviour.

As noted earlier, the practices and skills we need to address such behaviours in group contexts are not addressed at length here (p 10). This paper aims to introduce and explore the Adlerian/Dreikurs model as it contributes to understanding of challenging behaviours and to give a framework for counselling and behaviour support.

The need to avoid unnecessary confrontation (or embarrassment or sarcasm), is essential when we discipline power-seeking students.

This is to be distinguished from the use of necessary assertion to protect the rights of students when a student is being *repeatedly* distracting, disruptive, verbally abusive, dangerous or aggressive.

In these contexts firm, clear, *unambiguous assertion* is not only appropriate it is essential.

Swearing

We need to distinguish between frustration swearing, the sotto voce, and incidental swearing *at* someone (including the teacher). In the case of swearing *at* the teacher we give a clear, firm direction :- “I do not swear at you, I don’t expect you to swear at me.”

When we hear *any* directly hurtful language we need to say clearly, decisively : “We don’t use hurtful (or abusive, or sexist, or homophobic ...) language in our school.” “When you say things like (be specific) that shows (be specific) disrespect (or discourtesy, offence ...)”. Or even the direct, “That’s a put-down; it stops now.”

The student needs to hear the intensity of our ‘moral weight’ relative to the brief, clear, unambiguous ‘I’ statement; on occasion even : “I am disgusted by ... appalled by ... (be briefly specific but clear about the *behaviour*) ...”. Or “That is unnecessary ..., or offensive (disgusting, distasteful, cruel, cowardly, totally unacceptable)”. We use an appropriate degree of, and clarity of, description (regarding the behaviour). An assertive *tone* is not hostile or aggressive; it is decisively clear and firm.

If a student continues to speak or act in discourteous, disrespectful, derogatory or threatening ways, we will need to make the immediate (or deferred) consequences clear. This may need to occasion an appropriate time-out consequence. If any child makes a habit of using any hurtful language (or swearing, or homophobic/sexist language ...) we will also need to speak to them privately, (away from their peers), one-to-one (at recess time) to respectfully make clear why such

language is unacceptable, hurtful and wrong when used in put-downs, verbally attacking, threatening, bullying, aggressive ways.

It can help in the establishment phase of the year to have an age-related discussion on language use and social probity, (see Rogers and McPherson, 2014 and Rogers, 2015 for an extended discussion on the issue of swearing in schools).

If a child has sworn *at* another child (or you, as their teacher) an apology is respectfully called for (later – after some ‘cool down’ ...) within a restitutorial meeting. With any apology we always distinguish between sorry *words* and sorry *behaviour*. It is self-defeating, of course, to *demand* apologies. We communicate to the student that an apology is expected within restitution.

We can also help children who have low frustration tolerance and anger issues to learn ways to communicate such feelings without (easy) swearing and, also, to learn self-calming behaviours. (See, again, Rogers and McPherson, 2014).

Whenever we discipline an *individual* student – within their peer audience – that discipline intervention is still a ‘social exchange’. Dreikurs contends that teachers need to stay out of power-struggles and not insist they ‘must win’ or ‘must show who is boss’. This only reinforces and confirms the student’s ‘private logic’ about power.

Time-out

Appropriate use of time-out may often be necessary to ‘direct the student away from their peer audience in the classroom. Time-out practice needs school-wide protocols based in clear, assertive, respectful communication whenever we need to direct a student to ‘leave our classroom’ (to go to a nominated, and supervised time-out place) or send for a senior colleague to – respectfully – escort a student away from ‘our classroom’ (Rogers, 2011, 2014 and 2015). Even here, though, our conscious intention is not to merely set out ‘to force’ or ‘win’. It is important to stress, again, the teacher who initiates any time-out consequence should also follow-up with the student (one-to-one) within 24-48 hours to enable the process of repairing and rebuilding.

Case study

Working with a very challenging year 7 class, some years ago, a student was repeatedly showing off (during whole-class teaching time) :- calling out, talking over other students while they were

trying to share and discuss and making silly comments. I briefly reminded him of our expectations about class discussions ... He called out again; I briefly repeated the rule reminder, "Scott, you're calling out. Remember our class rule so we all get a fair go." *I resumed the flow of the lesson* (giving my attention back to the rest of the class who were enjoying the whole class discussion). He then called out loudly, "You can't say nothing here!" His 'last word'. He folded his arms, leaned back very noisily in his chair and sulked (noisily) for the rest of the whole-class teaching time (his 'secondary' attentional behaviours).

During the on-task phase of the lesson – when the students were settling to their learning activity – Scott dragged his chair into the centre of the U-shaped seating arrangement and started rocking on it, head back looking in my direction to check if I'd 'noticed' (I was working with a student at the back of the classroom). He then started singing "I'm not f___ing doing it! I'm not f___ing doing it!", "I'm not ...",

Of course every student stopped any work and watched (to see what would happen; the 'theatre'). Some students looked anxious, some (obviously) grinning – more 'theatre'. It was the second week of first term; this student was new to this high school. I looked across at Rosie (the teacher I was mentoring) and her returned pained expression seemed to say 'Now you know what I have to put up with!' The look was not one of reproach (it's a very supportive school). It was the feeling that *now* – in this shared existentiality as it were – another senior teacher was seeing the sort of behaviour she (and other colleagues) had been struggling with ...

The student's 'singing' was intermittent; 'goading'. He kept rocking noisily on the chair, in the centre of the room. I went over and, as calmly as I could, (not too close) said, "Scott (...) Scott (...)"; no returned eye contact. Before I could say anything he started to sing again, "I'm not f___ing doing it ...". Trying to find a 'break in the psychological and attentional traffic' (as it were) – in this intermittent 'singing' – I said, "You know you need to be back in your seat. When you're back in your seat I'll come and help ..." I walked off, back to the student I'd been working with. Before I reached the back of the class (to resume the support I'd been giving to students there) Scott started 'singing' again ...

He was 'forcing' events; this was much more than attentional behaviour (notice me) – this was arrant power-seeking. I imagine him saying 'Upstairs' in his 'private logic' something like :- "Come on *make* me – you can't can you?" I chose not to ignore this behaviour. He was (effectively) 'holding the class to ransom'. I refused to engage in a power struggle to try to get him to go back

to his work table or even to direct him to leave the room for time-out. (I suspected strongly he would have 'dug his heels in' at being directed to time-out ...).

My other year 7 colleagues and I had already discussed Scott's behaviours (across a number of subject areas) and agreed that if any student refused a teacher's calm, firm direction to *out-of-class time-out* (with senior teacher support) we could utilise a form of time-out where we would take 'the audience' (the rest of the class) away from any student engaged in *repeatedly* disruptive, aggressive or dangerous behaviour. In this form of time-out, a senior colleague is sent for (though in this case I was already in the room). The senior colleague stays with the challenging student and the class teacher 'calmly' directs the rest of the class to leave the classroom (with their class teacher). The key – here – is the assertive calmness of both teachers.

It is not the most 'elegant' strategy but it can send a calm, clear message to the student in question; 'you will not force us into a major power-struggle in front of your peer audience' and you will not be allowed to 'hold our class to ransom'. We also need to protect the rights of the other students to feel safe and not have their learning *significantly* – and in this case – *repeatedly* disrupted.

Scott continued to 'sing' as the students were leaving the class (some still looking at him, some still grinning as they walked out, adding to the last minutes of 'theatre') ... Most students, thankfully, ignored him.

I'd been standing by the class door as Rosie calmly directed the class out; in case he did a 'runner' Within a few minutes of the rest of the class leaving, Scott went under the computer table, huddled up and still 'f___ing and cursing'. When there was a break-in-this-verbal-traffic I said, "Scott, when you've settled down, I'm over here, we can talk." He continued to swear for a while, I tactically ignored his posturing and swearing. He then started crying bitter and angry tears. He eventually 'settled', and I walked with him, away from the now empty classroom to the 'interview room' (near the principal's office) and we began one of many conversations about his behaviour and how we could support him to understand why he was behaving this way and how we could support him in meaningful behaviour change. It is very important to stress again, even when a student has complex needs and a very disturbing home life (like Scott), we do not 're-victimise' the student by effectively saying, 'Well he can't help his behaviour because of his Oppositional Defiance Disorder, his Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder [Scott was on medication for both disorders ...]. We also avoid saying that we can't help him because of his terrible home life, or ...'.

Of course we need to be empathetic and supportive to at-risk students like Scott but we must balance an individual student's rights with the rights of all members on the school community to feel safe and enable, and support, the right to learn without repeated, significant behaviour disruption.

We were well aware of Scott's ADHD and ODD (and his medications). Medication, while it can often be helpful, cannot *teach behaviour*. We set up a personal behaviour support plan for Scott to firstly support behaviour awareness and behaviour change for Scott but also to gain some supportive consistency of approach across all year 7 colleagues. (See the detailed case study in Rogers, 2012).

“You can't make me!”

“You can't make me!” I've heard this many times from highly attentional or power-seeking students in classtime as they play out their 'social power' in front of their peers and teachers. For example when I remind (encouragingly) a student about work requirements and time progress of the learning task ... When they make the 'You can't make me' statement, it can be helpful to 'partially agree' with them. “Of course I can't make you. However, if you continue to choose not to do the work (or whatever the issue is ...) then I'll have to follow this up at recess time. If you need any help, though, let me know.” Then 'leave them' – as it were – to their choice/responsibility/and appropriate consequences. It is important not to make this sound like a threat; it is a form of consequential 'choice' within the fair rights/responsibilities dynamic. It is also important, then, to give some 'take-up time' (the 'walking away' to convey our confidence and expectation that the student will make some effort to co-operate ...). (Rogers, 2011, 2015).

I've had students respond to consequential 'choices' (like that above, or that on p 37f) with a sulky, “ I don't care ...”. It's enough to say (if anything) “I care”, then walk away, again, giving the student take-up-time and *tactically* ignoring the residual sulking and frowning ...

Of course if they then start hassling other students then we may need to make the time-out consequence clear. “If you continue to ... (be specific) then you will have to work away from others ...” Where there is *continual* disruptive behaviour we may need to make the time-out consequence clear (leaving the classroom for *supervised* time-out).

As with any student who is seeking power, the more we meet them with counter power (“I will make you ...”, “I will win here!”) the more it reinforces that student’s behavioural goal. This does not mean we are excusing their task avoidance/refusal/or their repeated distracting behaviour, it means we are aware of their goal and are *adjusting our leadership behaviour to avoid unnecessary power struggles*. We cannot (in reality) decide what the student will do; we can decide what we will do.

What about other students or copying such students?

Remember that 70% (sometimes more) of students in classroom groups do not seek to belong in *highly* attentional or power-seeking ways (thankfully). It is our confidence in the awareness of this social reality of group dynamics, and the compensatory behaviours of *those few highly attentional or power-seeking students*, that informs and enables the stance we take in our behaviour leadership.

Where our teacher leadership is confident, respectful, and based in a well-established (and maintained) rights/responsibility dynamic, the 70% (or more) of students will not easily ‘side’ with, or reinforce the ‘catalytic few’.

It is also crucial to remember that it is what we do in our one-to-one follow-up with such students that is likely to support a change in the student’s perception and understanding of their behaviour in relation to others (including their teachers) – particularly ‘goal-disclosure’ approaches. Such one-to-one sessions also demonstrate we do care and do want to (and will) support our students in changing the way they think about, and behave, in order to belong. (See Rogers, 2015 and in-service notes :- *Summary of Individual Behaviour Plans*, Rogers, 2017).

The emotional struggle with power-seeking behaviour

A student (like Scott p 31f) who is seeking power (in negative/confronting ways), directs his behaviour towards controlling, even ‘defeating’ those who try to ‘direct’ his behaviour or to exercise any discipline. This creates significant tension and stress for teachers. This is understandable; particularly when some teachers believe that ‘a good teacher *must be in control* at all times...’ ‘A teacher with authority *must show they can win ...*’ ‘No child should get away

with it ... (Meaningful authority is – of course – always earned and not merely based in a teacher’s ‘controlling power’ ...).

Dreikurs (et al, 1982), makes a salient point that has helped my colleagues and I many times when children seek to engage us in power-struggles :

‘The first obstacle towards conflict solving ... is the widespread assumption that the adult has to subdue the defiant child – to show him who is boss and make him respect law and order. The second stumbling block is the adult’s personal involvement in a power conflict. The teacher cannot avoid the conflict unless (they) are free from feelings of inadequacy and concern with their own prestige. No conflict can be resolved as long as (the teacher) is afraid of being humiliated, taken advantage of and personally defeated (Op. Cit. p 23).’

Hard words? Yes. This does not mean we *ever* put up with derogatory or abusive comments, such behaviour will always occasion our assertive leadership. What it does mean is that we don’t *pursue* and *extend* power exchanges by verbal battles, or sarcasm, or pointless threats (tempting as that may be). The skills of assertive language under pressure is addressed at some length (in actual case studies) in Rogers, 2011 and 2015.

With power-seeking students it is tempting (but counter-productive) to simply force the student to obey and submit.

A colleague of mine ‘forced’ a year 7 child to stay back after class to finish written classwork. He thought that the student needed this consequence because he had significantly wasted time in class. The student had frequently distracted others and task avoided. My colleague directed the student to a lunch-time detention.

He ‘stood over’ the student (as it were) saying, “You can’t go to lunch recess unless you’ve finished the written work.” (The ‘work’ entailed about half a page).The student stayed back after class. He grumbled, muttered, sulked and rapidly finished the ‘task’ in five minutes or so; cursory scribble. The teacher was about to check the work when the student picked it up, tore it in two, then threw it on the floor and walked out. The teacher called him back, threatening him with a further detention. The student countered, “I don’t give a shit!!” and he was gone.

This is a not untypical example of power-seeking behaviour. The student is effectively saying, “you can’t *really* make me do what you say.” “I’ll do what I want, I’m *really* the boss here ...”

The psychologist Haim Ginott noted in his book *Teacher and Child* that the most important factor in any discipline is – effectively – the teacher’s own self-discipline. He does not deny the natural challenges in teaching (and particularly discipline) but says we are at our best when we consciously remember that our *characteristic* leadership behaviour has a significant effect on our students for good or ill.

He also notes that good teachers invite enable and encourage co-operation from their students; they do not simply demand it. They do this by communication that addresses the student’s behaviour without attacking the student as a person (even when the teacher is addressing conflict). They also model the very behaviour they hope to see in their students. [*Teacher and Child* (1971) New York : Macmillan].

A good teacher is also a teacher who acknowledges bad-day syndrome – apologises to the students where necessary learns from it and moves on.

Good teachers acknowledge the natural stresses and vagaries of the demands of our profession but *consciously* seek to lead their students with respect and dignity.

Giving ‘choices’ within behaviour contexts

Directed choices are appropriate in a discipline contexts to the extent that they are able to direct the responsibility and accountability for behaviour back to the student.

With older primary and secondary aged students a *directed* choice can facilitate and enable co-operation.

I say *directed* choice because we do not simply give ‘free’ choices (to students) between alternatives. The choices we give occur within the rights, rules, responsibilities (held, and valued) within the school community.

Case example

A basic example : A student is speaking on her phone in classtime (year 11); it was on-task learning time in small groups (my colleague and I had finished whole-class teaching/discussion ...). I walked over to her table group and reminded her of our school rule, “Harmony, we’ve got a school rule for phones ...” Before I could finish the student said, “C’mon, Lindsay (the teacher I was working

with in that class) doesn't care. Anyway it's a job placement call" (her tone of voice was sulky, she frowned, raised her eyes to the ceiling and sighed loudly and indulgently ...). I didn't demand she hand the i-Phone over – a pointless power-struggle. Nor did I argue with her; that – too – would accede to an unnecessary power-struggle. I gave her a *directed* choice. "The school rule is clear, your phone needs to be off and in your bag, or you can leave it on the teacher's table until the end of class time. Thanks." I walked away to give Harmony some 'take-up time'. Behind my back she sighed, huffed again, and muttered loudly, "I'll put it away then if it makes you happy!" Her behaviour, now, extends the attention seeking. 'I'm going to try to get you, and the class, to continue to notice me ... to *extend* this ...'.

I chose to *tactically* ignore these 'secondary' aspects of her behaviour. She reluctantly began to do her classwork project. A little later I went back to her table group see how the students were working. When I asked her how her work was going she said, "Alright ..." Her tone was still very sulky, eyes raised a few times, an extended sibilant sigh [even in this brief, at micro teaching/encouragement, time at her work area ...]. It was as if through the sighs, and the sulky demeanour she was still saying, "C'mon *notice me*, say something about the way I'm behaving ...". Again I chose to *tactically* ignore these 'secondary behaviours' and sought to focus on her classwork *at this point*. And follow-up later with this student, one-to-one, away from her audience.

As I've noted several times, this is not easy because we may well *feel* frustrated, even angry about these 'secondary behaviours'. 'She *shouldn't* speak like that!' [she did!] 'She *should* show me respect!' [she didn't, at least not in that context as she played to her peer audience]. With regard to the tone/manner of the student, if we say anything about their disrespect it's enough to calmly (and firmly) say, "I'm not speaking to you disrespectfully I don't expect you to speak disrespectfully to me." A brief *firm* 'I' statement. Then – at this point – remind the student of the fair and expected behaviour. The key here (and there is no perfect key!) is to avoid *unnecessary* confrontation or pointless argumentation.

Our feelings of frustration (even anger, at times) are understandable, however our feelings obviously do not tell us what to actually do in the natural tension of working with challenging behaviour in group settings.

Going back to the year 11 student with the phone, imagine if the teacher had said, "Look I don't care why you were using that phone. I said put it away – now!!" While a display of this kind of

'power'/'authority' may seem resolute (I *will* win ...) all it does is re-inforce that latent attentional or power-seeking goal in the student. Remember, too, this is a young adult (a year 11 student). Imagine, then, the teacher forcing a student to hand over their 'third hand' (their phone). "Right give it to me. I *said* give it to me *now*! And don't make a big deal; sighing and carrying on! ...". You can easily imagine an adolescent (an emergent adult), whose goal is not just attention but power, matching (easily matching) the teacher's *demand*. Some students might say, "I'll put it away if I have to!" Some teachers still believe they 'must' still win *here and now*, "I said give it to me."

"No way, it's my phone!!" (It's more than a 'phone' : it's a portable computer; it's the student's 'third hand' as it were).

Some teachers (having now backed themselves – and the student – into a tense confrontational corner) will then *demand* the student leave their classroom. "Right, get out! Go on, get out. I'm sick of your pathetic arguing. You can get out!"

The student marches off, head raised, with their last word, "I'm going, it's a shit class anyway!" (or worse). Who won? The problem here (and I've seen this many times) is how the teacher defines their behaviour leadership – as one of 'winning' over a student who must 'lose'.

Our power, as a teacher-leader

Our 'power', as a teacher-leader, is derived not from how bossy or controlling we seek to be, but from *our ability to control ourselves* (as teacher leaders) within the day-to-day group contexts of classrooms and our need to exercise necessary and appropriate behaviour leadership. We use our power *for*, and our power *with* our students rather than defining power *as control over* our students :- "I must win here!" (win what?) "I must control this student ...". We can't really control others anyway; it's hard enough controlling ourselves! Within the role, and relationship we build with our students, it is our ability to use our power (as teacher) constructively to build, and enable, trust and enhance co-operation with our students. The rest of the students in the class (the 60/70/80%) quickly pick this up in the first week under our leadership (p 35).

By giving *directed* choices (where appropriate) we're enabling co-operation (even when given grudgingly by students). Most students do put *objects d'art* away when given such 'a choice' with appropriate take-up time; we don't stand over the student demanding them to put the object away.

Direct consequences

If, after reasonable take-up time, the student still hasn't put the distracting object (such as the phone) away, we need to *make the consequence clear*. In this case the consequence is *deferred* (not immediate); there is no safety issue at stake.

When we give a *directed consequence*, the tone and manner is not one of threat "If you don't do as I say you'll be on detention!" (or whatever). The element of 'choice' is still there. "If you choose not to put the phone away – the school rule is clear – I'll have to ask you to stay back at ..." (either after class, if we have time; or a five minute lunchtime chat).

Again, we don't argue with the student or try to debate the veracity or fairness of the school rule about phones (or whatever the issue is ...). We 'walk away' (giving take-up time) leaving the students to *own their behaviour and the consequences* within the fair rules, rights and responsibilities.

If they still choose/refuse to put the phone away, it is important we follow through with the behaviour consequence. In this example, the *deferred* consequence. It is important we then (later) make sure we follow up with the *fair certainty* of the consequence. Even if the consequence is a five to ten minute chat after the audience of peers has gone ... or if that's not possible we make a behaviour appointment later that day (or week at secondary level), the 'fair certainty' principle.

PS

In the case of Harmony I did, eventually, develop a reasonably positive working relationship. It was in that early establishment phase, with the class group, that she had 'tested' her relationships with the group and the new teacher.

Behaviour consequences

When we apply *any* behaviour consequence, whether it's the five minute after class chat, or subject teacher (or faculty) detention, it is important to emphasise the *fair certainty of the*

consequence, not intentional severity. Some teachers will use the one-to-one consequential time to 'get back' at a student (the one-to-one 'lecture'; even vilifying ...).

While it is understandable that student behaviours can create significant frustration for us, it is important to keep the fundamental respect intact even when we're following through with behaviour consequences.

If a student refuses to stay back for the after class chat, or refuses to turn up for detention, we will still pursue the 'certainty principle' by involving senior colleagues to support us in setting up one-to-one consequential time (for the student in question). Even here, though, it is not about *winning*; the emphasis is on the responsibility, accountability, and fair certainty aspects of the consequence. This will come across as much in our *manner* as in what consequences we pursue. [For a developed discussion of behaviour consequences see Rogers, 2011 and 2015].

Behaviour consequences can be used constructively by teachers to enable students to be aware of their behaviour (away, now, from their peer audience) and to take some responsibility and accountability for such behaviours (although it is pointless *forcing* apologies or 'promises' ...). Apologies are important in any restitution – in such cases we emphasise the difference between the sorry *words* and the follow-through of sorry *behaviour*.

If we have had to follow up with behaviour consequences a number of times (in those first few weeks of term one) we will need to pursue some kind of *year level* individual behaviour plan with the student. This will involve the support of senior colleagues in the establishment and 'maintenance' of such plans. This is particularly important at secondary level (Rogers, 2003 and 2015).

Encouragement

Dreikurs et al (1982) have argued that encouragement is paramount (sic) in building a child's self-confidence, learning ability and commitment to the learning process. He attenuates the word *courage* (from *encouragement*) with respect to the way we enable students to take the effort of 'learning risks' and in our continued and sustained enabling to help them to learn from their 'failure' as well as their successes.

When we help a child to build their sense of confidence as a learner, we are also enabling them to belong in constructive and cooperative ways – we strengthen their positive sense of self in relationship to others.

Conversely, when teachers frequently criticise and negate a child's effort it breeds discouragement (we can all, no doubt, remember our own schooldays ...).

Take the common example of a teacher commenting on a child's writing ...

"Yes you have used some interesting examples of adjectives of comparison here *but* your writing is very messy. Why can't you write more neatly...? If only you would try harder. Is it so difficult ...?"

When we give encouragement we don't need to add these kind of negative caveats. "OK you've marked the line where to cut the wood, but you're not holding the saw properly are you? How many times have I told you? No wonder you've cut the wood crookedly ..."

It is likely that it is only the last bit that is heard – and remembered – by the student, particularly with a child who feels inferior in their writing ability, or using a saw or ...

"No, that's not the way to do it!" (how many times have I heard *some* teachers say that when I was at school?)

I recall, in a woodwork class (as a student), my teacher saying, "if you put your index finger on the handle of the saw it'll help stabilise it; it won't jar as much. Do you want me to show you?" He was *always* encouraging; never "No you don't do it like that!" or "What did I say, weren't you listening?" "Come on (big sigh), give it to me I'll show you ..." I owe much of my confidence in using woodwork tools to this teacher.

Some teachers frequently qualify any 'praise' they give with the 'but ...', 'if ...', 'why ...?'

"You've *finally* finished nearly all your maths work today. Now *why can't you work like that all the time?!*"

Or the teacher had puts an immediate cross against the wrong maths work, then adds, "You weren't concentrating were you?" or, "You haven't made any *real* effort here have you, look how many you have got wrong." "If *only* you would concentrate ...". Even if that is true it doesn't help if a child *frequently hears it* ... When a teacher adds the unnecessarily qualifying caveat it negates the actual encouragement comment for some children. It is possible to 'mark' a student's work

and give accurate, meaningful and helpful feedback about incorrect work in a way that doesn't minimise or negate a student's effort.

The way we physically mark children's work can also unnecessarily discourage a child. I've seen children's workbooks covered with red markings, circled words, crosses ...

Careful marking (with brief margin notes – or endnotes – for feedback) still gives dignity to the student's effort. It is their effort that we are seeking to affirm and build on.

What encouragement seeks to do is to initiate and engage a student's self-awareness about, and meaningful understandings – even 'assessment' – of *their* work (or behaviour). Children know when our feedback and encouragement is genuine. As Dreikurs notes, "Children are keen observers and they know who is sincere and who is not. When anyone tries to put up a front, most children will sense this and resent or ridicule it." (Op. Cit. p 93).

Encouragement also needs to be distinguished from 'praise'. When we encourage our students it will help when we :-

- focus on *their* engagement and effort (regarding their work and behaviour). We do this quietly (without patronising), often as an 'aside' in class time (as well as in class workbooks/papers etc). Older students may get embarrassed by overtly public praise, particularly praise that centres *on* the child or uses overblown adjectives : "You were great!", "That was brilliant ... fantastic ... marvellous ...!" All these global descriptions give no meaningful information feedback to the student. They also *over-focus on the student* as the 'good' or brilliant one.
- It is also important to talk with the student about their work so that *they* can be more self-reflective; even very young children respond well to this. Instead of 'that's a great (or marvellous, or brilliant) picture ...' We talk with them about the features, colours, characters, and the contrasts in their picture. We also talk about with them how we have noticed what they enjoyed about doing their work. My colleagues and I call this 'conversational encouragement'.

I still hear some teachers say things like "You are the best student I've ever had ...", "You're the best at ...", "That's a great drawing ...". Praise like this, however well meant, focuses on the child in terms of 'how good *they* are ...' or 'how good *they* are at something'. When such

comments are said in other children's hearing it can breed natural resentment and unnecessary comparisons (as when the *best* essay is read, and when only the *best* art work is shown ...). Praise, in this sense, can actually be manipulative of the student's feelings and sense of self. "You are a good boy/girl for ... (or because) ...". As Ginott (1971) noted in his writings on praise and encouragement – *supportive* praise recognises and affirms a student's effort, allowing a student to begin to understand and *fairly* evaluate *their* work/behaviour. This kind of 'praise' *encourages and motivates* rather than 'judges'.

The teacher is not the sole *validating* person in the student's sense of work; or behaviour. Nor are students simply 'good' because they get correct answers (or conversely 'bad' because they get incorrect answers ...).

I've worked in a number of art classes as a mentor-teacher. In one such class (in a prison school) I chatted with a student about her 'gothic' drawing (the theme of the unit of work). The students were using a range of soft lead pencils. She had drawn Buffy ('the vampire slayer') walking towards a castle archway ... in profile; the moon casting a long shadow ... I asked her how she could get the moon looking so bright with just soft lead pencils and white paper. She began to explain what she was attempting to do. I then asked her how she had worked out where to place the shadow in relationship to the moon, the archway and Buffy ... She again, shared her thoughts ... This chat was relaxed; in no way strained. I asked her what was happening to the character ... I briefly noted how much I had enjoyed art when I was at school ... We chatted like this for some minutes and the student next to her said, "Can you look at my work too?"

My colleague (who I'd been team teaching with) noted later (over coffee) that she had not heard me say once that the student's work was 'great', 'wonderful' or 'brilliant'. She had also noticed the students clearly enjoyed, and were encouraged, and evidenced confidence by *talking with them about their work*.

It was the teacher/student discussion that *enabled the student to be self-reflective*. In this sense the student is able to see the effort in *their* work; it is evidential.

In one of my Humanities classes :-

“The way you have described loneliness in the character is very clear, very moving – particularly when you contrast how she is feeling with what’s going on in her relationship with the other characters such as ...”

Descriptive feedback – as encouragement – can become a more constructive and helpful ‘norm’, than the use of praise. If we do give a spontaneous (and genuine) ‘Wow!’, or ‘Great’ it will help to at least add *why* we were ‘wowed’ or thought what the student had done in work/behaviour that was ‘great’ or ‘brilliant’ ...

While we need to help students with errors, we can do this constructively without over-focusing on a child’s struggle, or failure; particularly past failures.

“You’ve really got that idea, now, of how to multiply decimal fractions. The last few questions were a bit tricky though; I can see how it might have been more difficult to do this. Let’s see how we can go back and have another look.”

‘By using that sharp pencil Michael, you’re able to get an accurate reading with the protractor on those obtuse and acute angles.’

‘The way you’ve set your chart out, Shaun, makes it easier for me to read what the steps in the experiment are ... particularly for someone who’s not a science teacher like me ...’ (I said this to a student when I was mentoring in a science class recently – and I meant it).

‘The way you’ve carefully labelled your diagram makes each part of the process really clear ...’

‘There’s been some difficult words to remember this week, Elise; you’ve made an effort to use them (and their meaning) in your writing on this topic ...’

‘Those are interesting adjectives, Ahmed; see how many ways you’ve been able to describe that box ...’ (this to a student where we were discussing adjectives of size, comparisons, shape, colour etc).

If a student rejects (or seems to reject our feedback/encouragement) eg : the student says something like, “Anyway I think it’s rubbish (my work)”. It will not help to ‘over service’ what may be a form of attentional behaviour . “Oh it *is* good; your work *is* good. I *really* meant it. Please don’t say your work is rubbish ...”

It’s enough to say, ‘I meant it’ and walk away (at that point) to work with another student.

Encouragement also reassures and strengthens one's belief in oneself; one's ability, effort, progress ... as Malala Yousafzal has said, "Encouragement makes you believe in yourself." (in an interview on ABC television [Australian Broadcasting Commission] 2014).

Mutual respect

Dreikurs frequently affirms that, "Mutual respect is based on (the) acceptance of the equality of human beings, independent of individual differences, knowledge, abilities and position." (p 69 Op. Cit.).

Respect :-

- means respecting the essential dignity of the individual.
- Is based on *equality and mutuality of rights*; this is at the core of the UN Charter on the rights of the child (and on human rights generally). Respect is intrinsically related to fundamental human rights. It is the basis for building co-operative classrooms and schools. In being aware of, and considering others' rights, we (in effect) affirm and acknowledge our own rights. We can stand up for our rights – firmly and respectfully – without trampling on others' rights. The teacher's modelling of mutual respect is essential in building a rights-enhancing and rights-protecting school community.
- Means recognising the equality of difference (in gender, race, background ...).
- Means that even when we need to discipline a student we never reject them as a person. This is probably the most challenging value we seek to hold as teachers. It means we can (and should) balance firmness with kindness; assertion with not holding grudges. It means (and this is also very difficult) starting each day afresh with the student as it were; particularly when we've had to utilise behaviour consequences.

I would further argue that we don't have to *like* all our students (some students will be much easier to *like* than others ...). Respect is about our *behaviour towards others*; the way we *treat them* ... It is pointless *trying to force ourselves to like* a student whose behaviour (at times) can be not just annoying but even obnoxious ... Respect is about *a mindset we hold to and one's behaviour towards* the 'unlikeable'. This key feature of the concept of inter-

personal respect is also important for children. We are not also asking our students to 'like' (and enjoy liking) every single fellow student; 'liking' is related very much to preferential, social, behaviour.

- Respect also doesn't mean we ascribe some kind of false 'virtue' to someone when it is not deserved, nor does it mean deferential esteem. It is more to do with basic civility, manners and co-operative social courtesy, and – most of all – about the way we treat others. These are understandings even young children can be taught, encouraged and can understand. Conveying respect also *enables* a student's self-respect (Rogers, 2011).

For a sustained discussion on respect within teacher-student/s relationship see Rogers 2011.

- The conveying of respect (not excusing a student's distracting/disruptive behaviour) is an essential pre-requisite in addressing and resolving behaviour issues and initiating restitution.
- Respect derives from fundamental rights. Rights also *entail* responsibilities and rules. Good and fair rules give protection to rights (of all members of the school community). Such protection, though, needs consciously respectful leadership by all teacher leaders in the school community. It also requires our 'relaxed vigilance' with respect to any issues of harassment.

Classroom meetings

Classroom meetings are constructive ways and means and opportunities in which a teacher can raise the purposes/'goals' behind attentional and power-seeking behaviours – generally – (without naming a particular student). Eg :-

- 'Why do you think some students call out lots of times or click their fingers loudly in class discussion time?' 'Why do some students butt in or talk over others when others are trying to have their say?' 'Why do some students hassle others (give some common examples) when they are trying to work ...?' 'Why do some students refuse to do the set work when they are able to do it?' Why do some students tease others (such as ...) or bully others ...?

As Dreikurs (1982) notes, when we raise such questions, "the child is not discussed personally, he learns vicariously" (p 37).

My colleagues and I have used this approach many, many times as a group awareness raising about 'mistaken goals' in student behaviour (see Rogers, 2003 and 2009). Such meetings can also raise empathy among members of the class group as they start to become aware of feelings of inferiority, and from those students who are compensating (or over-compensating) through mistaken behaviour goals. Some students will actually offer helpful suggestions to support such students while still expecting accountability in their fellow students for behaviours that arise from their mistaken behaviour goals.

There needs to be clear rules, and expectations for such meetings (Rogers, 2011 and Rogers, 2003). And such rules need to be fairly and firmly enforced to give such awareness raising discussions a genuine fair go. [See also Rogers (2009) *How To Manage Children's Challenging Behaviour* 2nd edition on case examples of such meetings].

Such meetings are not always commonplace at secondary level. It can help to conduct such a meeting with a colleague skilled in such approaches. To conduct a constructive meeting (to raise general questions and discussion about disruptive behaviours and what might lie behind them ...) is no mean feat. Such meetings need to be planned and the key emphases telegraphed to students *beforehand* : how to best arrange seating of students; how to initiate, develop and sustain discussion; how to encourage the less confident students and how to refocus the more garrulous and strident members of the class. Clear rules of procedure are crucial And, of course, how to draw such class meetings to a meaningful conclusion.

Biography

Dr Bill Rogers is a teacher, education consultant and author. He conducts in-services and seminar programmes across Australia, New Zealand, Europe and the U.K. in the areas of behaviour management, effective teaching, stress management, colleague support and teacher welfare. He has also worked extensively as a mentor-coach in classrooms; team-teaching in challenging classes in Australia and the U.K. Bill Rogers read theology at Ridley College, Melbourne; then psychology and education at Melbourne University and went on to major in Education. {He is a Fellow of the Australian College of Educators and Honorary Life Fellow of Leeds Trinity University and Honorary Fellow at the Graduate School of Education, Melbourne University}.

Endnotes

¹ One of the terms attributed to Adler is that of *Gemeinschaftsgefühl* (community feeling) – that our social relations, and relationships; our actions towards others should – where possible – seek social care and social good. He was a practical socialist. Dr Beran Wolfe (a translator of Adler's *Understanding Human Nature*, 1927) notes (this word) “connotes the sense of human solidarity (our) connectedness (to one another).” (p 58).

² By ‘causative pathology’ I mean all those factors that contribute to a child’s behaviour at school; factors over which we have ‘little’ or no control. These factors range from a stressful family dynamic where there may be substance abuse, generational poverty, long-term unemployment, significantly stressful family relationships, (including domestic violence ...) characteristically poor diet (low in essential fatty acids, essential minerals and vitamins), inappropriate TV; disconcerting, even extremely negative and harmful attitudes, values and beliefs (about race, ethnicity, sexism, homophobia) and the tragic evil of abuse ...

While we cannot control this ‘causative pathology’ *we can create a safe, secure environment at school; indeed we must*; this is our calling. We also need to help the student *to belong* in ways that do not contribute to maladaptive, damaging (even destructive) beliefs about social attention and power.

Where a child is exhibiting any significant at risk behaviour, schools should be alert to those factors (above) and seek to enable the student (and his parents /caregiver/s) to seek and utilise professional support.

The reality is, however, even in disturbing home environments that the child is probably still attending school (where he spends up to a third of his waking day). It is in *that context* that teachers (and support teachers) have to daily interact and support children with complex needs and complex ‘causative pathologies’. As well as any professional support we can garner for the child we will still need clear behaviour support plans for those children *while they are with us at school*. It is in the context of that reality that the work of Adler and Dreikurs on ‘mistaken goals’ and ‘goal disclosure’ can help such students and teachers alike as they develop *any* individual behaviour support at school.

³ Sibling *rivalry* is often a normal part of a child’s development in a family dynamic. The problem occurs when the ‘rivalry’ becomes on-going, is re-inforced by parent/s, is destructive and is sustained (even into adulthood!)

⁴ When we give a specific rule reminder to a student – or to a class group – we utilise *inclusive language* : “*our* rule ...”, “*us/we/our*”, “*all of us ...*”, “*together*”, “*everyone*” ...

As a teacher, it is not *my* rule, or even *my* class (in this sense). Of course we have leadership responsibility to establish and maintain essential rights and responsibilities but our behaviour management *language* reflects the emphases of rights and *our inclusiveness as a class group*.

We also avoid easy use, or *overuse* of ‘*Don’t*’ in brief discipline exchanges in classtime. Eg : “Don’t call out ...”, “Don’t talk while I’m trying to teach ...”, “Don’t fiddle with your pencil case – can’t you see I’m trying to teach?”

The problem with discipline language *frequently* expressed in “Don’t” cues is that it only tells the students what we don’t want/expect them to do ... When we say something like “Rebecca (...) Chantelle (...) looking this way and listening thanks ...” we are directing the student/s to the behaviour we *fairly* expect (the *looking* ... the *listening* ...). Of course, our tone needs to be confident/positive/respectful not overly cajoling/pleading demanding or hectoring. Our *characteristic* tone of voice is also a significant factor in how discipline language is *heard* by our students (in terms of perceived intent and expectation of the teacher).

We also avoid using pointless interrogatives such as, “*Why* are you two talking? *Can’t you see* I’m trying to teach?”, “*Why are you* calling out?”, “*Why are you* late to class?” (This to a student who walks in late while the teacher is teaching ...), “*Why aren’t you* doing your classwork?” (Again, see Rogers, 2011; Rogers and McPherson, 2014; and Rogers, 2015).

As Dreikurs 1982 (et al) note “it is useless to ask a child ‘Why did you do this?’ He often doesn’t know *why* (even when he knows his behaviour is inappropriate or wrong.) It is those one-to-one settings where we can explore ‘the why’. It is here that the student can begin to understand his goal.” (p 14) (underlined mine).

⁵ I’ve put commas around the verb ‘guess’ to indicate that when we propose the reason why we think the student behave the way we do it is more than *merely* a guess.

⁶ It is worth noting that if the at-risk student is female then the teacher who takes on a case –supervisory/mentoring role should be a female (for obvious ethical probity in sustained one-to-one teaching/ mentor sessions). A *case-supervisor* at secondary level (in the sense discussed here) is a teacher who is given dedicated time release to take on the role of working with at-risk students (in terms of behaviour and learning needs). These colleagues have skills and experience working with challenging students, at-risk students and students with diagnosed (and symptomatic) behaviour disorders. They work with these students one-to-one in a counselling/mentoring role to *teach key academic/social behaviours the student needs to negotiate in their day-to-day schooling*. The case supervisor will develop and enable any such plan within a year-level (collegial) approach. [See particularly Rogers, 2006, chapter 7; 2003 and 2015]. They also liaise with *all* subject teachers, support teachers, special needs colleagues, school counsellor (and, where applicable, educational psychologists).

Appendix
Narcissistic patterns of behaviour

“All cruelty springs from weakness.”

Lucius Annaeus Seneca (4BC – 65AD)

Roman Stoic Philosopher

Narcissistic behaviours as an expression of attentional or power-seeking behaviours.

While *features* of narcissistic behaviour are typical in developing adolescents, Professor Jean Twenge [in an interview on the Australian Broadcasting Commission's Radio National programme (May 16, 2014)] suggests there has been a rise in narcissistic behaviour among the young¹. In this, she says, it is the *over-focus* on the self rather than others that is central to narcissism. She believes that there is an increase in narcissistic behaviours (compared with previous generations) as identified within the Narcissistic Personality Inventory². Those rating high on this inventory are less likely to show empathy, valuing of others, and caring in their relationships.

'Narcissists are missing that piece about valuing, caring and their relationships ... one of the biggest differences ... those communal and caring traits tend to be high in most people with self-esteem but not among those high in narcissism'.

Jean Twenge and her colleague Keith Campbell have investigated a general cultural/social change in narcissistic perceptions and behaviours, in their research, as noted in *The Narcissism Epidemic : Living in the Age of Entitlement* (2009).

They note that narcissistic self-worth is based in an *over focus*, even *obsessive* sense of self. In narcissistic behaviour there is an *over projection of self*, self-importance and *self-worth*. A *frequent scanning for attention, approval and admiration*. Secure people simply do not need to keep perceiving their sense of worth and 'importance' in that way; with *frequent* demands for attention and approval. At its worst obsessive narcissism is illusory, disturbingly self-deceptive and manipulative (see later p 10f in appendix).

Narcissism scores, in their research among college students, were significantly higher in 2000s than in the 1980s and 1990s.

The meteoric rise in celebrity culture, and how social media is utilised, has played its part too. With its benefits (social media), it also carries a self-reflective pool within which to be admired, noticed and within shallow (often ephemeral) fame that is celebrated and made 'aspirational'. The hundreds, thousands, of 'friends' on Facebook and *followers* of twitter can then give a shallow sense of 'social connection' as social 'importance'. As Professor Twenge notes, 'Narcissists are skilled at on-line connection'. She further makes the point that there is a correlation with narcissism and Twitter and Facebook usage; the correlation is in *how attention is sought*, "it helps

make those more shallow connections (sic) about Facebook friends are as opposed to real-life friends where it's going to be closer and more committed and more caring for each other ...”

This is a cultural change, according to Twenge and her colleagues, seen even in the increased use of ‘I’, ‘me’, in popular literature and the media generally as an indication of ‘a more self-absorbed focus’. Educators, too, have noticed an over-focus of *expectant praise* in children; attitudes and behaviour expressed as ‘I *deserve* to be praised; you *should* praise *me* because I am *better* than ... or *better* because...’ (see p 41f, the discussion on the difference between praise and encouragement in the main text of this paper).

- People who score high in narcissism tend to have trouble in relationships because of an *over focus* on themselves and wanting – and frequently *seeking* – to be noticed.
- There is a tendency towards frequent *expectation of praise*. In educational terms we would distinguish *praise* from encouragement and feedback (see p 41f in main section of this text).
- “I am special, I am special look at *me* look at *me* ...” (from a pre-school song). Twenge notes that our focus, in education, needs to address ‘perspective-taking’ (others’ needs, feelings) and hard work and self efficacy instead of always *having to feel* special, unique; and to have *that feeling frequently validated*.
- Celebrity culture often reinforce features of narcissistic behaviour through obsession with physical beauty and fame. A cursory look at morning TV programmes will show the difference between healthy living and an over-focus on *physical* beauty. I must *look* sexy and can *feel* sexy if I wear this, use this kind of make-up, work out on this kind of machine ... The emphasis is not really on healthy body or diet as such rather on the ‘me-ness’ of it all.

“Mirror, mirror on the wall ...” Mirror, mirror in my hand

The eminent psychoanalyst Dr Bruno Bettelheim (1976) makes a salient point about the fairy tale Snow White, “The stepmother’s narcissism is demonstrated by her seeking reassurance about her beauty from the ‘magic’ mirror long before Snow White’s beauty eclipses hers ...”

Narcissism is very much a part of the young child’s make up. The child must gradually learn to transcend the dangerous form of self-involvement. The story of Snow White warns of the evil consequences of narcissism for both parent and child. Snow White’s narcissism nearly undoes her as she gives in twice to the disguised queen’s enticements to make her look more beautiful, while the queen is destroyed by her own narcissism.” (pp 202-203).

- Twenge also notes a correlation between narcissism and focusing on money and fame and image (underlined mine).
‘Reality TV’, she suggests, really makes narcissism seem ‘normal’ to a whole generation of people; normal and glamorous and a ‘necessity’.
- She distinguishes self-esteem (as basic *self-worth*) a confident sense of self – in relation to others and a ‘good sense of your own abilities’. “Self-control and hard work, that’s beneficial. And perspective-taking, something that narcissists don’t do very well, to take someone else’s perspective, to think about what it’s like to walk around in their shoes. That is so useful for getting along with people, whether that’s at work in your relationships.”

Alfred 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.' (Adler, 1927 Op. Cit., p 68).

'Instead of interesting themselves in an adjustment to their fellows, they are continually preoccupied with themselves, and with the impression which they make on others.' (Ibid, p65).

'Such an individual loses his sense of reality because he loses his connection with life, being always occupied with the question of what other people think about him, and being concerned chiefly with the impression that he makes.' (Ibid, p 155). '(They are) ... more concerned with the *semblance* of things than with their *essence*, and beside the fact that it causes him to think constantly of himself, or at the most only of other people's opinion of him; its greatest danger is that it leads him sooner or later to lose contact with reality.' (Ibid, p 155).

'Where we are dealing with pathological power-drive we find individuals who seek to secure their position in life with extraordinary efforts, with greater haste and impatience, with more violent impulses, and without consideration of anyone else. These are the children (and adults) whose actions become more noticeable because of their exaggerated movements towards their exaggerated goal of dominance.' (Ibid, p 68).

[added parenthesis]

In his novel, *Martin Chuzzlewit*, Dickens presents us with a character aptly named Mr Slyme.

“ ..the choicest of swaggerers : putting forth his pretensions boldly, as a man of infinite task and not undoubted promise.”

Dickens draws this character as one redolent of, “boastfulness and bile.”

In introducing this character (early in the novel) Dickens presents Chevy Slyme, feigning self-pity at life’s harsh treatment of him, “I am the most miserable man in the world I believe!” His far too patient companion seeks to reassure him.

Slyme continues to paint his self-image to all who are present, “I swear ... that I am the wretchedest creature on record. Society is in a conspiracy against me ... I’m full of genius; I’m full of information; I’m full of novel views on every subject ...”

We might be tempted to add, ‘and full of _____’

This unctuous and appalling character having been thus slighted by a world that does not recognise his ‘undoubted genius’ over his fellows retreats into self-pity avowing that he will preserve his self-respect adding, “tell ‘em that no man ever respected himself more than I do!”

Sound familiar?

Chapter 7 *Martin Chuzzlewit*.

Narcissism on a train

On a recent long train trip in the UK, my wife and I decided to upgrade to the very reasonable weekend first class rate – very pleasant. We were heading north; a long trip; we were looking forward to a relaxing train journey.

As the train drew out of King's Cross Station we heard, and saw, a very loud passenger across the aisle from us. He was leaning back in his first class seat, mobile phone in hand, speaking as if he needed to be heard in the next carriage. Glancing briefly at the passengers sitting next to him (at a foursome table), I noticed their anxious faces ... "is he going to be like this, with us, the whole trip?!"

Leaning back he droned on, loudly, pretentiously, "YES. I NEED A GOOD HOTEL, CAPETOWN, NEAR THE AIRPORT ..." then, a little later, "YES, I'M PLAYING GOLF ON THE EAST COAST NEXT MONTH; YOU WANT TO KNOW MY RANKING ...?" (No – please we don't!) ... On, and wearily on he regaled whoever the poor sod on the other end was. We learned (no choice) how important he was ... how important his work was and how important he was to them, where he was in the world blah, blah, blah ... going overseas, again ... *longuers* ... I noted in brief, episodic, glances that as he spoke (are we deaf!) he panoptically checked to see if we had registered how important he was from his monologue on the phone ... I also noted – as I made brief eye contact with my immediate fellow passengers – they were clearly annoyed and fed up with this narcissistic pratishness.

Then, mercifully, he stopped; bliss. Short-lived; another call and another interminable monologue of where he would be flying to hither and thither in the next month ...

I looked across at my wife with that special, silent, telepathy of forty-five years of marriage and suggested whether I should pass a short note quietly across the aisle to him saying, "Are you aware of ...?" Her returned non-verbal reply said, 'Tempting, but maybe he'll stop soon?' He didn't. It seemed to go on interminably with short (now aurally oasis-like) breaks. Then, we could hardly believe our good fortune, he got off at York ...

I noted, immediately, a kind of communal sigh of relief from my otherwise reserved British fellow travellers. The carriage seemed a much happier, calmer, place. It was.

While he was with us, it was as if he had been working at, even controlling, his ego-gravity; as if with a kind of psychological 'heliocentricity' he could draw us into his need to have the rapt attention he clearly believed he 'deserved' (and 'needed') ...

I wonder if his phone was actually on and if anyone was actually there?

Third hand, second 'brain'?

It is not uncommon, today, that many young people use their smart phones to take countless photos (often 'selfies') to identify, affirm and 'consolidate', perhaps even validate **self**. Even the twitter traffic (Twittersphere ...) is used not merely to inform, share and celebrate but to frequently service the self, the I (ego) with seemingly unending attention from others.

Of course smart phones are, in effect, portable computers and their ability to photograph – to 'capture', celebrate and share one's journey and community are used much as we used cameras in the past. It is the *obsessive* selfies, seen in some celebrities (those who are famous for being famous; for being fawned on by the media in that cybernetic attentional loop ...). The over-capturing of the self to megaphone the message : *I have to be noticed, I am so special, so look at me* (and follow me on twitter ...).

Even the term **selfie** has the trace memory of Freudian narcissism; almost the modern equivalent (in its more extreme expression) of the 'mirror' of Narcissus. In this more obsessive sense the self is constantly being referenced and attentionally 'neon-lit' to the world : "*I am ...*", "*I am important*", "*I need your attention*", "*I have to be noticed*", "*I am signified ...*", I am – therefore – significant. I am self-ied; I am (a new Cartesian 'form'?)

The Myth of Narcissus

In the Greek myth, Narcissus is the son of a nymph and river god. It was said that Teiresias (the famous seer) noted (of him) that, Narcissus will live to a ripe old age provided he never knows himself.” He is described as having a ‘stubborn pride in his own beauty ...’ Graves (1996) p 267.

The nymph Echo pursued his love in vain. Echo had faced a punishment by Zeus that she could not use her voice ‘except in foolish repetition of another’s shout ...’ (Ibid) This punishment was for regaling Hera (Zeus’ wife) with long stories.

One day, in the forest, when Narcissus was hunting, he strayed from his companions and got lost. He shouted out, “Is anyone there?”

Echo, who had been vainly following her amore (Narcissus) tried to call back ‘Here!’ Narcissus could not see her but continued to respond to the voice “Come!” Echo (returned) echoed each call of Narcissus’ back in vain; unable to connect in normal speech. Eventually she appeared before him, he shook her off, and Echo ‘spent the rest of her life in lonely glens, pining away for love and mortification until only her voice remained.” (Ibid). The ‘echo’ (our English word) is derived from this mythological character.

One day, coming upon a ‘spring, clear as silver ...’ (ibid) Narcissus bent to drink and seeing his own reflection fell in love with his mirrored image. Pathetic? Of course ...

This is, in part, the meaning of the myth and of narcissistic behaviour itself. When we observe such behaviour we think it is childish; that such a person is ‘full of themselves’. And, psychologically, they are.

As Narcissus gazed again and again into his mirrored image he became enraptured ... “How could he endure both to possess and not to possess?” (Told you it was pathetic).

Falling in ‘love’ with his reflected ‘self’ he grieved in torment, unsatisfied, until in agonised ‘despair’ he finally plunged a dagger into his breast. “Alas! Alas!” Where his blood fell up sprang a white Narcissus flower. The balm of this flower was traditionally said to have some medicinal properties. (The narcissus flower : from the daffodil family ...). Graves notes the derivation of Narcissus as ‘benumbing’ or ‘narcotic’. (p389 Op.Cit.)

Freud noted that the characteristic feature of narcissism is that of loving oneself ...”a libidinal³ complement to the egoism of the instinct of self-preservation ...” in Gay (1995) p 546. “That libido that has been withdrawn from the external world has been directed to the ego and thus gives rise to an attitude which may be called narcissism.” (Ibid)⁴.

It is – effectively – a failure to *realistically* distinguish self in relationships.

Drawing on the Narcissus myth, Freud argues that Narcissistic personalities – like the mythical character – Narcissus, have a *self-absorbing focus* that limits social interaction.

Freud attached a psycho-sexual focus to this self-absorbing focus (the libido) where the individual invests their engagement in their ego, and its expression of reflective self-absorbing attention⁵.

Freud believed that many of the core myths (particularly Greek myths) portrayed fears, taboos, desires, complexes that occur in the unconscious. Their expression – in myth – allowed a culture to develop and explore and reflect on these ‘unconscious’ taboos and desires⁶.

As Reber (1985) cautiously notes, core conceptualising (with Freudian theory) is a “penchant for rummaging down through layers of the psyche to seek understanding and explanation ...” (p 287).

Freud’s most famous (and controversial) use of a classical myth was that of the *Oedipus Complex*. In his ‘construct’ of the ‘Oedipal Complex’ he draws on the myth of Oedipus’ killing of his father Laius (unawares) and years later marrying his mother Jocasta (unawares). A myth pressed too far? Freud, utilised this myth as a construct for his psychoanalytical theory about infant sexuality, and ‘psychosexual stages’. The most controversial aspect of his theory is the male child’s ‘castration’ anxiety; the child’s unconscious desire (in Freud’s theory, a sexual desire) for his mother and the latent hostility to exclude the father; perceived as a ‘rival’. A person’s later neurosis – it was theorised - can be traced to unresolved conflict at this early stage : the ‘Oedipal complex’.

C.S. Lewis (1961) makes the salient point that the story – in the myth – is not merely, or only, a story of a man who married his mother “but about a man cruelly destined to marry his mother, *unknowingly and unwillingly*, in a society where such marriages were regarded as abominable ...” (p 142). A story told, “because it was beyond all precedent” (ibid).

In this myth, and from this myth, Freud explored the taboos of incest and patricide (as he also did in the *Electra Complex* ...). See also Freud’s *Totem and Taboo*.

In his major text on anger, the psychologist Albert Ellis (1977) links narcissism with 'grandiosity'.

He emphasises that narcissism goes beyond wanting love and care from others and is "an insistence that they do (love us), and (the person) feels completely shattered when they don't. Such shattering (sic) is self-induced since we, rather than they, down ourselves by our *dire need for others' acceptance.*" (underline mine) (p 108).

Narcissistic personality disorder

This discussion paper is addressing features of Narcissistic behaviours present the more extreme features of attentional and power-seeking behaviours as theorised and delineated within Adlerian theory and therapy and the work of Rudolf Dreikurs in the application of Adler's model in school-based contexts.

Where narcissism becomes a *disorder* it is the **frequent** and **characteristic** nature of Narcissistic behaviours that are present :-

- The 'demand' for *entitlement* to attention; respect; of 'others' expected compliance to a 'rights-given' expectation or demand that things **must** be this way, and must proceed this way, because "I say they must ..."
- This sense of entitlement is often expressed in a demanding way ... "I **deserve** to be treated this way (ie : 'the way I say I should be treated ...!'); people **should** do what I say **because** / know/ I am right about this ...". A judgemental and condescending belief and social stance.
- "I **should** / **must** be noticed and admired because I am special, **more** knowledgeable ...; **better** than ... You **should** (therefore) notice, attend, admire me ...".

The theme of self-importance is a key factor in narcissistic behaviour disorder ... an **over-rating** of one's abilities, skills, talents, achievements ... The narcissistic person will always have a fund of 'stories' to authenticate how 'good' they are ... This can (obviously) often have the ring of fantasy about it; though not always at first sight.

This, again, springs from a characteristic sense of superiority of *knowing better and making sure others know that*; in effect – arrogance.

- **Exploitation of others** and an inflexible, lack of affect function and **social manipulation**
(more prevalent in males than females)

Controlling behaviours

This is a very common, disturbing and even destructive feature of narcissistic behaviour; it can often be cruel.

This cruelty – expressed mostly in psychological ways (intimidation, deceit and lies as controlling manipulation). It springs from weakness. As the Roman Stoic philosopher Seneca said, “*All cruelty springs from weakness ...*” The inferiority/superiority complex that Adler posited is a foundational trigger for such cruelty. Its goal is power; psychological power is at the heart of all bullying in all its cowardly forms. That inward inferiority *compensating* by the exercise of power over other/s. The twisted ‘private logic’ that says, “I can make you feel less than me; make you feel weak, insignificant, incapable and powerless around me, or *because of me ...*” This ‘superiority complex’ (p 6 in the main text) springing from a sense of inferiority (in relational and social comparisons).

Narcissistic behaviours within a spectrum

Narcissistic behaviours, like all aberrant behaviours, occur within/across a spectrum. It always has to be noted : how *frequently* do such behaviours occur? How *durably*? What is the *intensity* of such behaviour? and how *generalised* is their occurrence?

The DSM (Diagnostic Statistical Manual) addresses Narcissism within the framework of *Narcissistic Personality Disorder*. That is not the focus of this paper. *Narcissism as a diagnosed disorder needs clinical diagnosis and clinical therapy.*

Narcissistic personality in its thinking and behaviour tends to be expressed as being : self-absorbed and wanting frequent attention focused on self. As noted earlier it is seen in the person frequently ‘*talking themselves up ...*’. They are very often exhibitionistic. This is often expressed as an ‘entitlement’; often expressed in arrogance and an *expectation* that others *must/should* defer to them; that they *deserve special attention and treatment* from others. In this their behaviour can often be disingenuous; deception and lying is not uncommon. The more chronic form of lying is – primarily – to gain a sense of superior status that the person believes is crucial to their self-image and social ‘identity’. The lying is both a *projection of imagined self* and ‘refinement’ – and self-reinforcement – of that superior self-‘identity’.

There is often an exaggerated sense of self-importance where the individual *over-rates* and *over-values* who they are, how important they are, what their talents, contribution/s to must mean ... and what their accomplishments are. Aristotle describes such behaviour in his *Ethics*, “the boaster is regarded as one who pretends to have qualities which he possesses either not at all or at a lesser degree than he pretends ...” (Book Four, p 165).

They can appear likeable, and charming at first, *as long as things are going ‘their way’*. Observing their behaviour over time, however, will soon reveal how exploitative, manipulative and deceitful they are. As noted, self-deception and self-promotion through lying is not uncommon. In close personal relationships this will often mean they seek to manipulate the other/s so they receive a sense of dependency from the other; that the other cannot get by, cope, or get on without the narcissist’s ‘apparent’ help, guidance, expectations (in effect *control* ...). This can often create a sense of confusion and uncertainty and doubt in the hearer. This behaviour is a way of creating manipulative dependency in their relationships with others to boost distorted self-esteem and their distorted sense of power.

As noted, this is a perceived *entitlement* with respect to the acknowledgment of their specialness, uniqueness and (at more obsessive levels) their ‘greatness’. What Aristotle refers to as ‘*over ambition, prodigality, vaingloriousness, boastfulness, rashness and irascibility*’ : the vices of excess (in his *Nicomachean Ethics* *ibid*).

As Twenge (2009) (Op. Cit.) has noted, narcissists tend to have a lack of empathy; a lack of *perspective taking* of others’ feelings, needs, concerns. At their worst there is an abusive reciprocity of the narcissist feeling good when others feel bad (as in any controlling behaviour such as bullying – and bullying is always about power and control).

They can make (some) others feel bad, as if it’s their fault that the narcissist is the ‘way they are’. ‘You don’t understand me! – and it’s *your fault*’. They project their illusory self on others and then force the other’s attendance to that ‘self’. In this they typically distort ‘reality’ so that it serves their distorted self-concept and self-image.

The more extreme expressions of narcissistic behaviours are also associated with socially/ relationally aggressive behaviours. (Miller, Campbell and Widiger) (2010).

Narcissistic mindset

It is not uncommon that more extreme narcissistic behaviours present with a typically demanding mindset : “I *must* be noticed ...”, “People *should* show me respect and admiration *because I am so good at ... / better than ...*”, “I therefore *must* have others’ approval ...”,

“I *must* be in control ... at *all times*”, “People *should not* ignore me ...”, “People who do not do as I say ... deserve punishment ...”, “*Because* I am right about ...”

“When I do something for you – for others – I *should*, I *must*, be praised; for **it is I** who do you a favour”. It is not about care, generosity, fairness, love or even appropriate duty – it is always about ‘the narcissist’ having his ego massaged, satisfied; ‘authenticated’.

A significant feature of counselling in these cases is to respectfully challenge and dispute the basis of such a mindset (although the last thing one feels like giving in any such counselling is basic civility and respect ...) (Rogers, 2012).

As soon as these bald, demanding belief statements appear on paper one can see the disturbing irrationality behind them. A demand that things *must be* when they are – clearly – often not (!)

Therefore, when a person with such a mind-set is slighted, criticised or called to account for their behaviour, their resultant anger is blamed on the other : “It’s your fault *you made me* angry ...”

This arises from a frequent lack of *personal* accountability and responsibility for their actions; they externalise any call to account as blame. “You *should not* have blamed me for ...”, “You *always* pick on me.” The psychoanalyst Karen Horney termed this “the tyranny of the *shoulds* ...” (the demanding, insistent, *shoulds*).

Dr Albert Ellis (the ‘father’ of Rational Emotive Therapy) said that such irrational beliefs can be categorised under three major (ones) with many derivatives :-

1. I must do well and win approval for my performances, or else I rate as a rotten person.
2. Others must treat me considerately and kindly in precisely the way I want them to treat me; if they don’t society and the universe should severely blame, damn, and punish them for their inconsiderateness.
3. Conditions under which I live must get arranged so that I get practically everything I want comfortably, quickly, and easily, and get virtually nothing that I don’t want. [Ellis, 1980b, pp. 5-7] in Bernard and Joyce (1985).

In Cognitive Behaviour terms these beliefs – within such a mindset – are irrational in the sense that the *characteristic* features of such a mindset are “absolutistic, evaluative and demanding features to their) assumptions about themselves.” These beliefs also do not equate with basic day-to-day social reality. (in Bernard and Joyce, 1984, p 51).

Counselling support (see particularly, pp 19-27 in the main section of this paper)

In any supportive counselling with adolescents who exhibit narcissistic behaviours we need to clearly enable their self-awareness about their mindset and behaviours.

- They will need to know why, *as a school community*, we do not tolerate characteristically manipulative, controlling behaviours; frequent deceit; any bullying of any kind.
- They need to know that *characteristic extremes of selfishness; boasting and chronic lying* are not normal, fair or right and that our school does not tolerate such behaviours.
- We need to name and focus clearly on the narcissistic *behaviours*. We do not attack the person. Our approach is always respectful; we should never seek to ‘dominate’; or ‘score’; or ‘win’. (See, particularly, p 39f in main text).

We also need to address, and expose, the *narcissistic mindset* and challenge and dispute its irrationality. Adlerian and Cognitive Behaviour Therapies will always seek to address *characteristic thinking patterns* behind maladaptive behaviours.

Of course, self-awareness – as a factor in counselling – is very often painful (to those we counsel) but it is a necessary step in behaviour change. As Alfred Adler has said, “The hardest thing for human beings to do, is to know themselves and to change themselves.” (1927, p 21).

As with all counselling and support for students who present with challenging behaviours it is important to enable the student :

- *to be aware of their frequent, and characteristic maladaptive behaviours* that are causing significant concern for others (including their parent/s).
- to challenge and enable the student in a clear understanding of their *characteristic thinking patterns* as they affect perception and behaviour (particularly in social relationships).
- to explore the ‘goal-seeking’ pattern of such behaviours; (pp 19-27 in the main text).

- to dispute and respectfully challenge the basis of a narcissistic mindset and to further challenge the student to develop a realistic mindset about how they interact and engage with others in their social relationships.

When students can be supported to make a genuine effort to understand the links between their characteristic mindset and their behaviour the basis for supportive behaviour change is possible.

- encouragement to change behaviour within a *realistic and supportive* plan; a behaviour support plan. (Rogers, 2003; 2011). Any such 'plan' will need to address the person's rights/responsibility focus. The concept of *mutuality* of rights is a very challenging concept for characteristically self-absorbed, self-focused, 'self-referencing' and selfish adolescents (or adults) as it inherently implies *perspective-taking* regarding the rights, feelings and needs of others.

In this paper, the key counselling emphases are those of Adlerian Psychology and the seminal work of Rudolf Dreikurs as noted in the main paper. Cognitive Behaviour Therapies (particularly Rational Emotive Therapy) are also used by colleagues to address attention and power-seeking behaviours of students.

Of course any counselling approaches need to be supported within whole-school protocols (including the ethical probity of *any* one-to-one contexts) and with the support of educational and clinical psychologists working with the school. It is important that the counselling role, when addressing the extreme expressions of narcissistic behaviours, is undertaken by counsellors (or psychologists) skilled in this area of adolescent behaviour.

Footnotes to Appendix

1. Jean Twenge is a professor (Dept of Psychology), College of Sciences, San Diego University.
2. According to Professor Jean Twenge, the NPI (Narcissistic Personality Inventory) is cited in 80% of studies in Narcissism.
3. *Libido* – in psychoanalytic terms – is a theorised ‘energy’ derived (in Freudian terminology) from the *id*. It is primarily conceived of as a ‘sexual energy’, even an instinct (as of Eros). See Reber (1985) p 402.
4. The term Narcissism came into the language of psychology and Psychoanalysis through the English doctor Havelock Ellis in the late 19th century.
See also *The Freud Reader* ‘On Narcissism’ : Freud’s paper (1914) pp 545-562.
5. Like Jung, Adler did not *emphasise* sexual factors in his psychological theory (cf Carter (2011) p 58).
6. A *myth* is generally considered a way of both explaining (and exploring) the creative genesis of a society (even of creation itself). It seeks to explore features of culture and society, its mores, its social ideas and constructs and key features of its morality and taboos.
The Greek word for myth (*mythos*) carries both the meaning of ‘speech’ and ‘discourse’ (later, legend, and fable would be appended to the word myth).

Kenneth McLeish (1955) (in the Introduction to the classic work on *The Greek Myths* by Robert Graves ...) notes that myths “in a practical and metaphorical way” offer a way of thinking about the questions of creation, existence, relationships between human beings, their customs even “the self-image of this or that community ...” (p 11). A myth offers a kind of “communal viewpoint and focus. A myth also connects (its people with) its forbears and ancestors validating the present moment with a wide, generic, frame of reference”. McLeish calls this “a binding force” (ibid).

The Greek Myths, particularly, have had a wide, and pervasive, effect on Western thought and literature (since the Renaissance). As McLeish notes, “(the) Greek myth(s) survived

intact, in a better state than almost any other ancient world system (sic)" (p 12). McLeish further notes :- " ...eighteenth century painters, sculptors and opera librettists left practically no story from classical myth or history untouched ..." (p 16 Ibid).

Myths are sometimes trivialised or ignored because of their historical unverifiability, their obvious lack of *any* scientific, or *direct* historical truth. This is not the issue, or focus in myths; nor the way of addressing and understanding major myths. Such myths have informed, engaged, illustrated and explored the widest range of human experience in literature, and art and philosophy. For example Camus in his major work on the myth of Sisyphus and, of course, Shakespeare in many of his plays. Constructs and terms in psychology, astronomy and even medicine reference Greek/Roman myths (ouch! 'my *Achilles* heel has gone ...'). Such myths offer,

"precedents, for example, of everything ... what beauty was; the difference between bravery and cowardice; how to be sly, proud, noble, faithful, long-suffering, a hero, a fraud, a nuisance. The characters and incidents of myth were so multifarious that they were not so much lateral to life as a continuum of life itself and every variety of human experience and behaviour ..." (McLeish, pp 12-13. Ibid).

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