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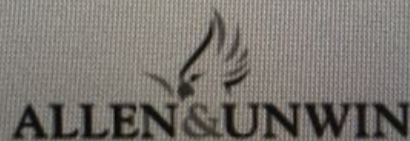


The courage to be disliked, Ichiro Kishimi and Fumitake Koga. Heard good things, let's dig in

THE COURAGE TO BE DISLIKED

How to free yourself, change
your life and achieve real
happiness

ICHIRO KISHIMI and FUMITAKE KOGA



Youth tells philosopher, life is hard and complicated and full of struggle. Philosopher says life is simple. Debate ensues

They discuss the subjectivity of water temperature - 18deg is cool when weather is hot, warm when weather is cold. No escape from your own subjectivity

P: Instead of lamenting about the world's darkness, you could just remove the dark glasses.

Y: people cannot change. I am suffering because of my inability to change

Narrator: why is Y like this, so determined to refute P? Feelings of inferiority, self-pity, self-consciousness

Y: people want to change precisely because they can't

P: why are you so adamant about this

Y: I have an incel friend

P: why do you think he can't go out?

Y: background?

P: so cause and effect? determinism?

Y: ya

P: if determinism were true, wouldn't everyone be incel

■

Y: so u saying past doesn't matter

P: aye

Y: so there's no explanation why my friend can't go out?

P: your friend is insecure so he can't go out. Flip it: he doesn't want to go out, so he's creating the anxiety.

Y: ridiculous. You're saying he's pretending to be sick

P: no

P: the anxiety is real. But we need to focus on purpose, not cause

Y: what's the diff

P: when you're sick, it doesn't matter why you're sick

Y: are you denying the existence of trauma??

P: yup. we are not determined by our experiences, but by the meaning we give them

Y: so my friend wants to be miserable?

P: he wants the attention

Y: so you're saying my friend is... happy?

P: nah. He's achieving his goal

Y: wtf

P: let's not talk about your friend. What about you?

Y: Yesterday someone spilled coffee on my nice jacket. I yelled in anger. I'm usually a quiet person. How do you explain this

P: you got angry so that you could shout.

Y: wtf

P: if you had a knife on you, would you have stabbed him?

Y: of course not

P: you wanted to shout.

P: a mom and daughter are quarrelling loudly. The phone rings, the mom answers politely. Then she's angry again. Anger is a tool she uses to overpower her daughter and thereby assert her opinions

Y: jfc you fucking distrustful nihilist

P: lol what

Y: u deny human emotion

P: no. Everyone has emotions. But emotions can be controlled. It's determinism that's nihilistic. So u the nihilist, lol

Y: I don't want to be but the past is so powerful

P: because you want it to be

Y: god fucking damnit

Y: ok so you're saying I can become a joyous sunbeam

P: do you want to be?

Y: I think I'd be happy if I were

P: so you are currently unhappy. Because you hate yourself?

Y: yeah duh

P: don't feel bad, few people like themselves

Y: do you?

P: eh, I accept myself

Y: ...

P: you choose unhappiness

Y: fuk u

P: it's because you think unhappiness is good for you

Y: why the everloving fuck would I do that

P: I don't know. Debate me to find out

Y: wtf. fine

P: u chose your personality too, when you were about 10

Y: ?? Ok but suppose it's true. So what now? I can choose it all over?

P: yup. But you make the decision not to

Y: ??

P: you describe yourself as unhappy. You say you want to change. So why not change?

Y: HOW

P: shitty + familiar lifestyle is more comforting than maybe-better but unfamiliar lifestyle. You are scared. You're not incompetent, you're just a coward. You lack the courage to be happy.

Y: so what do I do

P: make a decision to stop your current lifestyle. No more "if only"

P: in fact, saying "if only I could be like X" is an excuse to not change. Like my wannabe-novelist friend, who wants to be a wannabe-novelist full of excuses, not a novelist who struggles and faces rejection

Y: wow, big mood

Y: so trauma and environment don't matter, everything is my choice and my fault? Fucken harsh, man

P: not criticising u. All that matters is what you do now

Y: now now?

P: the only now there is. The past doesn't exist

Y: this is some heavy shit. Brb next week

P: lol k see u

P: *story about student with fear of blushing*

Y: so she fabricated that fear of blushing as an excuse for her own inability to confess her feelings. Or as a kind of insurance for when he rejected her

P: yea. I told her "it's easy to cure your fear. But I won't help you"

P: "it's thanks to your fear of blushing that you can accept your dissatisfaction with yourself and the world around you, and with a life that isn't going well. If I cured it, you'd probably ask for it back, and I can't do that"

Y: ■

P: similarly, you dislike yourself preemptively because you are afraid of being disliked by other people. Your goal is not to get hurt in your relationships with others. You imprison yourself for safety purposes

Y: sigh I hate you but you're probably right

P: life is pain

P: furthermore, all problems are interpersonal problems

(Visa: true)

Y: that's a lie! Academic sophistry! What about individual agony?

P: we cannot do without interpersonal relationships. But so-called internal worry does not exist. The shadows of other people are everpresent

Y: don't humans have loftier, greater problems? Happiness, freedom, the meaning of life? And you're saying interpersonal relationships are everything?

P: are you familiar with the term "feeling of inferiority?"

Y: yeah, duh. me_irl

P: what are those feelings, specifically?

Y: someone my age is more successful. What am I doing with myself? A friend is happy. Why am I miserable? Why don't I make more money? Why aren't I more accomplished?

P: All of these are value judgements of yourself. You feel worth less

Y: I know that feels

P: look at me. What was your impression of me, physically?

Y: ur short

P: 155cm. When I was your age, this bothered me. I imagined a more enjoyable life was waiting for me 10-20cm higher. I told a friend this. He dismissed it as a bunch of nonsense

Y: wow rude

P: he said, what would you do if you got taller? You know, you've a gift for getting people to relax. tall men intimidate people

(true)

P: so it made me realize that being smol was desirable. It transformed my values. I let go of my feeling of inferiority

P: my feelings about my height were subjective feelings of inferiority. If I hadn't had anybody to compare myself against, I wouldn't have any occasion to think I was short. You too are suffering from this. Understand that this inferiority is *subjective*, not objective

P: value is based on a social context. A \$1 bill's value is nowhere near \$1. If I were the only person in the world, I'd be putting those bills in my fireplace in winter, or using them to blow my nose. And I wouldn't care about my height.

All problems are interpersonal problems.

(Gonna stop summarizing the dialectic and switch to a more bird's eye view, otherwise this would go on for too long)

everyone feels inferior in some ways + a desire to escape helplessness

you can use feelings of inferiority as motivation to act. be watchful for when you use it as an excuse to give up

there's also a superiority complex - eg bragging. confidence doesn't boast

Some people will even brag about their misfortune. If you try to help them they'll refuse the helping hand by angrily saying "you don't understand how I feel". Most people learn to treat these people carefully, specially. They become special. Weakness can be powerful

Adler: the strongest person in our culture is the baby. The baby rules over the adults with his weakness. And it is because of this weakness that nobody can control him

Y: but so... then what? Do we denounce the pursuit of superiority?

P: just keep moving forward without competing or comparing yourself to others

Y: how?

P: don't compare to others, compare to your ideal self. We're all different. And we're all equal

Y: so do we treat children and adults the same?

P: as human beings, yes. With sincerity

Y: so you're like free from worldly shit

P: more or less. I'm an outsider philosopher with no connection to worldly competition

Y: doesn't competition push you to be better

P: lol sure

P: if you can see your competitors as your comrades, fine. But if you're not careful you will fall into seeing them as your enemies. Eventually everyone in the whole world is your enemy, which makes the world a terrifying place.

In truth the world doesn't notice you much at all

P: if you treat people like comrades, your worldview will change. You will feel less anxiety, less endangered, less doubt

Y: what a happy person you are! You are a sunflower bathed in sunlight. I am a gourd grown in the dim shade

P: lmao this shit again?? We went over this

Y: so you're never angry?

P: I feel indignation re: social problems. But it's a rational indignation, not a sudden burst of emotion. Personal anger cools. Righteous indignation persists. Anger as an expression of apersonal grudge is a tool for making others submit to you

Y: if someone hurled abuse at you for no reason?

P: I would contemplate their hidden goal. When you feel genuinely angry due to another person's words or behaviour, consider that they are challenging you to a power struggle.

Y: ??

P: eg a child will tease an adult with pranks and misbehavior. This is usually for attention, and stops shy of the adult getting truly angry. But if he does not stop, his goal is to get into a fight

Y: why?

P: to prove his power. By winning.

Y: ??

P: you're discussing politics with a friend. It gets heated and turns to personal attacks.

Y: I wouldn't put up with this

P: what is the other person's goal? Does he simply want to discuss politics? No. He finds you unbearable and wants to provoke you, make you submit

Y: why run when you can pwn him instead?

P: say you defeat him with words. He will withdraw. And then plot revenge, and retaliate.

Y: how

P: child oppressed by parent will turn to delinquency, self-harm. Revenge! Almost impossible to resolve. So avoid needless power struggles

Y: so I should bear personal attacks?

P: no. Disengage. Do not react

Y: that's tough

P: understand that anger is a form of communication. You don't need to use it. We can communicate without it. When you understand this experientially, the anger emotion stops appearing

Y: so I shouldn't get angry when someone insults me?

P: it's not that you mustn't get angry - but that you do not need to use your anger to communicate. Short-tempered people are typically incompetent communicators

P: one more thing: beware "I am right and they are wrong". Once you are convinced of this, you're already in a power struggle. The focus shifts from "the rightness of assertions" to "the state of the relationship". Many people rush into trying to make others submit to them

They talk about self-reliance in the context of social relations - "there is no work that can be completed all by oneself". What people fear isn't the work, but being criticised or rebuked, being labelled as incompetent. Loss of dignity.

All problems are interpersonal problems

P: it isn't that you dislike A because you can't forgive his flaws. You had the goal of disliking A, and then started looking for flaws to satisfy that goal

Y: why would I do that

P: to avoid an interpersonal relationship with A

Y: ???

P: happens a lot in marriages

P: one invent flaws in other people to avoid their life tasks, blames their environment, lies to themselves and to others

Y: how could you know if I'm lying?

P: I don't. All I know is that you chose your lifestyle, no one else

Y: argh

P: this is not about good and evil. It is a matter of courage. You could be clinging to your lies; that's not something to be condemned from a moralistic standpoint. It is only an issue of courage

Y: i don't think I can ever break free from my inferiority complex

P: y not

Y: seems like I lack courage. WTB courage pls

P: let's discuss freedom. What is freedom?

Y: idk. Dostoyevsky said "money is coined freedom"

P: let's suppose u r rich but still unhappy

Y: fml

P: why would you still be unhappy, if rich?

Y: relationships

P: how do relationships rob you of freedom

Y: demands, obligations. My parents wanted X

P: how did you feel when you did X for your parents?

Y: resentful. Also some relief; that they'll finally recognise me

P: Adlerian psychology denies the need to seek recognition from others

Y: how

P: recognition is nice but unnecessary. Why do you need it?

Y: eliminate inferiority

P: this is the influence of reward-and-punishment education/conditioning

Y: wat

P: "if nobody praises me, I won't take appropriate action. If nobody is going to punish me, I'll engage in inappropriate actions." You've been conditioned

Y: wtf? Wanting recognition is a normal desire

P: u been brainwashed son. We are not living to satisfy other's expectations

P: when you concern yourself only with how you are judged by others, you throw away who you really are and live other people's lives

Y: ?? but

P: if you modify your life to get the recognition and live up to people's expectations, do you think you will be happy?

Y: ...

Y: so I should be selfish?

P: suppose you have a child who has a hard time studying. ■ attention in class, ■ do his homework. What do you do?

Y: everything I can. Tutors. Discipline. That's how I was raised actually- no dinner till homework

P: did u learn to enjoy studying?

Y: no... just did what I had to

P: in Adlerian psych we ask, "whose task is this?" Whether the child studies or plays, it's his task, not the parent's. A parent commanding his child to study is intruding on another person's tasks

Y: then what is to be done?

P: do not intrude

P: interpersonal troubles are caused by task intrusion. Simply separating tasks is enough to change relationships

Y: isn't it the parents duty to get the child to study? They're the guardian. No child WANTS to study

P: parents say "it's for your own good". Kids know this is BS

Y: so if my child doesn't study at all, i simply let him be?

P: pay attention. Adlerian psych doesn't recommend non-interference, which is the attitude of ignorance. You tell the child that it is his task, and let him know you are ready to assist when he needs. But don't intrude

Y: idgi

P: forcing change while ignoring the person's goals and intentions will only lead to an intense reaction

Y: so the counsellor does not change the client's life?

P: you are the only one who can change yourself

Y: what do you do if your child becomes a shut-in?

P: first I think, this is the child's task. I would tell him that I am ready to assist him whenever he is in need

Y: you can be so detached with your own child??

P: children do not become what their parents want them to become

P: it's natural to worry, as a parent. But my child does not live to satisfy my expectations.

Y: that's tough...

P: if you are stressed, learn the boundary of "from here on, this is not my task". Taking on other people's tasks turns ones life into something heavy with hardship

P: suppose your parents are vehemently opposed to your choice of work. Coming to terms with the emotion of "not approving" is your parents task, not yours. Not your problem

Y: are you saying it doesn't matter how sad I make my parents feel??

P: yup

Y: wild

P: all you can do with regard to your own life is to choose the best path that you believe in

Y: what what other people think of me - even my family - that is their task, not mine?

P: yep. Why do you even care? Why assume that other people's tasks are yours?

Y: sth feels wrong

P: imagine an asshole boss

Y: I work for one

P: he dislikes you, unreasonably. But there's no reason for you to get cosy with him

Y: how do I get any work done then

P: "I can't work because of my boss" is another life-lie. What you should do is face your tasks honestly

P: we are all suffering in relationships. 1. Ask "whose task is this?" Calmly delineate up to what point your own tasks go, and from what point they become someone else's. And do not intervene in others', do not allow intervention in yours.

Y: ■

Y: in theory, separation of tasks makes sense. But... so I have to brush people away when they're worried about me and ask me how I'm doing?

P: u know Alexander the Great? He cut the Gordian knot

Y: I'm not Alexander the Great. How can I build good relationships by cutting...?

P: separation of tasks is not the final objective; it's the gateway. Be ready to lend a hand, but give people space. Any good r/ship needs some distance; not too little and not too much. Adler: "children who have not been taught to confront challenges will avoid all challenges"

Y: I can't do this

P: why?

Y: your separation of tasks is a form of disengagement from the world

P: do you want someone to intervene? Decide your path?

Y: maybe I do!! I don't have so much clarity about what I want out of life, clear-cut dreams and objectives!

Y: recognition from others helps to guide my actions

P: this is a very unfree way to live. You say desire from recognition, but really you're afraid of being disliked

Y: nobody wants to be disliked

P: but how do you escape this? Can you swear loyalty to everybody?

P: try to please everyone and you just end up falling short + appear untrustworthy.

Y: so I should be egocentric?

P: separating tasks is not egocentric. Meddling and intervening in other people's lives is egocentric

Y: you're a nihilist, anarchist AND a hedonist

P: people who choose unfree ways to live, when seeing free people, criticise them as hedonistic. This is a lie to help one accept his own unfree life. Truly free people do not make such comments; they cheer on the will to be free

Y: what's YOUR definition of freedom

P: to live like a stone tumbling downhill is to be a slave to one's desires and impulses (including the desire for recognition, and the fear of being disliked). Real freedom is akin to pushing up one's tumbling self from below

Y: ?

P: all problems are interpersonal problems. We seek freedom from those problems. In light of what we have discussed so far, the answer to "what is freedom" should be clear

Y: ?

P: freedom is being disliked by other people.

Y: ???

P: it's proof that you're exercising your freedom and living in accordance with your own principles.

Y: but...

P: it's certainly stressful to be disliked. But trying to escape it is a very unfree way of living, and also impossible. The cost of freedom is being disliked.

Y: so... I should try to get people to dislike me?

P: No. I am not saying to engage in wrongdoing. The point is that people will dislike you anyway. What I'm saying is, don't be *afraid* of being disliked.

Y: can anyone actually endure the weight of freedom? To not care even if one is hated by one's own family? Can one become so self-righteously defiant?

P: do not be self-righteous. Do not be defiant. Simply separate tasks.

P: when you have gained the courage to be disliked, your relationships will all at once change into things of lightness.

P: let's talk parents. I've always had a bad relationship with my father. My mother died without us ever having had a real conversation. Until I encountered Adlerian psychology, I thought of it all in Freudian terms: my father hit me and that is why our relationship went bad

P: Adlerian psych reverses the position. I brought up the memory of being hit because I don't want my relationship with my father to get better. It was convenient. I could use having a shitty dad as an excuse when my own life wasn't going well. Also, revenge

Y: then... how?

P: change the goal.

Y: does that really fix things?

P: of course

Y: Reeeaaallyyyy?

P: yes. Remember, separation of tasks. It no longer mattered to me how my father responded

Y: so were you able to repair your relationship?

P: yes, I think so.

(We're about 3/5ths done with the book, but I gotta get to bed! If you've enjoyed the work I've put into summarizing this, buy me a coffee? ■ I'll finish up the rest tomorrow) <https://t.co/oOfzmtc0mX>

Y: I tried separating tasks. It requires defining a boundary, saying "I am I and you are you". It's so self-centered. Misguided individualism. Isolation

P: you misunderstand. Separation is not about keeping people away - it's a way of thinking to unravel the complex entanglement

P: your threads and others' threads are all tangled up, and you're looking at the world while in that condition. You think entanglement is connection

Y: what is, then?

P: let's talk about "community feeling"

Y: ?

P: I mentioned comrades earlier. "Community feeling" is the sense of refuge when living amongst comrades, sharing with them

Y: uhuh

P: when you think of community, what comes to mind?

Y: household, school, workplace...

P: Adler extends it to the entire universe.

P: community feeling is the most important index for considering a state of relations that is happy. Do you know what is society's smallest unit?

Y: the family

P: smaller: it's you and I. When there are two people, society emerges in their presence, as does community

Y: and?

P: you make the switch from self-interest to social interest. What is your idea of a self-centered person?

Y: selfish tyrant. irresponsible egotist

P: & also people who can't separate tasks, are obsessed with recognition

Y: y?

P: they look to others, but the focus is on them

Y: is that so bad?

P: while the I is life's protagonist, it is never more than a member of the community. If you're not careful, you'll start assuming people exist to serve you and care about your problems. when those expectations go unfulfilled, you feel insulted, resentful

P talks abt how everything is connected, we're all a part of the universe, our actions affect each other across the globe, etc. Once you know how big the world is, your local drama seems trivial. We belong to the global community, so local community strife shouldn't get us down

Y: ok but what about the struggle of individual relationships

P: let's talk parent/child or senior/junior relationships. Is it more effective to raise by praise, or by rebuke?

Y: praise. Animal training has demonstrated this. Positive reinforcement

P: Adler says do neither

Y: how?

P: imagine if I responded to one of your questions with "good job, Y!" How would you feel?

Y: condescended to

P: exactly. Praise is partially the passing of judgement by a person of ability on a person of no ability. so praising your child reinforces hierarchy

Y: ■

P: think about a time when you've had help from an equal - what do you say to him?

Y: "thank you"

P: gratitude, delight - encouragement that's based on horizontal relationships, without judgement

Y: is there really such a big difference between "thanks" and "good job"??

P: it's not about the words; it's about the framing. What do the messages imply about the nature of the relationship. You want to be careful to be non-judgemental. To be praised is to be judged as good according to someone else's yardstick. This can diminish freedom

(I have a feeling consensual BDSM would be very confusing to these folks)

P: remember, inferiority is a matter of subjective worth. To feel worth, one has to be able to accept oneself as one is and have the courage to face one's life tasks. But how does one become able to feel worthy Worthiness is a function of feeling truly beneficial to the community

Y: so are you saying a person who isn't useful to others is worthless? Babies, invalids, my bedridden Grandfather? They aren't qualified to live?

P: I reject this. Focus not on acts, but on being. We are of use to each other just by being.

Y: wat