

Developmental Sequence of The Feeling of Community

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(This is a broad simplification of the development of the feeling of community. See the general notes for additional information.)

SEQUENCE		CHARACTERISTICS
APTITUDE	Potential	The feeling of community is an innate potential which has to be consciously developed by training into skill and ability. It is innately so small that it must benefit from social understanding to develop. After becoming an ability, it may then acquire secondary dynamic characteristics of attitude and motivation.
	Behavioral	Behavioral capacities include: making contact with others; relating to others in a useful way; and contributing to the common welfare. The ability to cooperate depends on the degree of the feeling of community.
ABILITY	Intellectual	Intellectual capacities include: understanding others' point of view and needs; accepting common sense over private logic; recognizing the inter-dependency of people; appreciating the contributions of others; and reasoning with view of immediate and future social consequences.
	Emotional	Emotional capacities include: empathy for others (to see with their eyes, to hear with their ears, to feel with their hearts); feeling connected to others; and the ability to feel and express acceptance, liking, and love for others.
STYLE OF LIFE	Attitudinal	Attitudinal capacities include: feeling at home on the earth; a sense of harmony with the universe; a deep identification with others; a letting go of a preoccupation with self; and a profound feeling of belonging and embeddedness in social evolution.

	Motivational	Motivational capacities include: sustaining an active, creative, and generous interest in the welfare of others; contributing significantly to the community; and making unconditional, ongoing, spontaneous, positive social effort. The feeling of community is not manifest as mere conformity; it implies a constant striving for improvement and correction toward an ideal community for all people. The feeling of community, as a value, can be adopted as the individual's primary meta-motivation (See Abraham Maslow's <i>The Farther Reaches of Human Nature</i>). From an Adlerian viewpoint, genuine ethics are a result of a very high level of the feeling of community, and are a reflection of optimal mental health.
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INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE AND SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT		
EARLY DEVELOPMENT	Mother	The potential for contact and cooperation first develops between the child and mother. These capacities should be extended in ever widening social circles. She may mistakenly limit the child's interest to herself.
	Father	The father has the second chance for making a cooperative connection with the child and spreading it beyond the home. He may be able to enhance what the mother has started, or compensate for what she has been unable to accomplish.
	Siblings	Brothers and sister have the third chance of stimulating a cooperative attitude and extending it to other children.
	Teachers	If the family members have not won the child's cooperation, teachers have the fourth and crucial opportunity to elicit this crucial quality. Many earlier mistakes made in the family can still be corrected in the school.
LATER DEVELOPMENT	Friends	Encouraging and supportive friends offer many opportunities for pursuing interests and engaging in activities for mutual benefit. For some people, they may also provide an extended or substitute "family-like" network.

	Love/Sexual Partner	A mentally, emotionally, and physically intimate relationship can deeply enrich the feeling of community, both between the individuals involved, as well as between the couple and society.
	Work Associates	Meaningful work, with cooperative, encouraging, and creative associates, can validate the feeling of having made a valuable individual or team contribution.
	Spiritual Community	A spiritual community or practice may offer a feeling of belonging to a group, and sense of interconnectedness with all of life.
	Therapist	The therapist provides a safe and supportive relationship for the individual to make a trustworthy mental and emotional connection, stimulating the development of a mutually respectful cooperation. This experience must then be extended to others in that individual's life.
ADJUSTMENT	Normal	The feeling of community is the Adlerian barometer of mental health. It also provides a positive compensation for the normal inferiority feeling, by generating the knowledge of being genuinely valuable--which originates from contributing to the common welfare.
	Maladjustment	All forms of social failure and psychological disorder, reveal a lack of a sufficient feeling of community. Problems are approached or avoided without adequate cooperation, and fictional goals of personal superiority are pursued, yielding imagined triumphs or defeats that have only private meaning and value.

GENERAL NOTES

1. This table is based on concepts originally developed by Heinz Ansbacher.
2. More detailed information about the feeling of community can be found in the **distance training courses** [Basic Theory](#) and [Intermediate Theory: Part I](#)
3. For a comprehensive overview of Adlerian psychology, read [Classical Adlerian Theory and Practice](#).
4. For a visual representation, see [The Feeling of Community](#) graphic.
5. In **psychotherapy**, the progressive development of the feeling of community usually requires a series of cognitive, affective, and behavioral strategies. For an overview, see the [Stages of Classical Adlerian Psychotherapy](#) table and the audio

cassette study/consultation program Classical Adlerian Psychotherapy: A Socratic Approach.

(In an attempt to create a clear, simple table, much detail must be excluded. This is a work in progress, and any feedback or suggestions for refinement would be appreciated. Please e-mail your comments to: Henry T. Stein, Ph.D., HTStein@att.net).

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