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BOOK PROPOSAL

(WORKING TITLE): THE ART OF ADLERIAN EARLY MEMORY INTERPRETATION

Overview

When you think back to your earliest memories they may seem quite banal – fleeting recollections of sitting on a grandparent’s lap or of playing with a favorite toy. Yet, according to pioneering psychiatrist Alfred Adler, “Every memory is a chosen reminder.” In Adlerian psychology, an early memory serves as a metaphor for one’s unique philosophy of life.

Working Title teaches its readers to master Alfred Adler’s previously unpublished technique of early memory interpretation. Adler deliberately chose not to commit his method to writing, but he did teach this technique to certain of his students in person. While living in Vienna in the 1990s, I had the opportunity to learn this technique directly from a student of a student of Adler, Conrad Kaplan. I later met Kaplan’s teacher, Edith Foster, and we interpreted each other’s memories in the classic Adlerian fashion

Using numerous examples of real early memories, the book shows how early memory interpretation lies at the center of Adlerian theory (also known as Individual Psychology). Drawing from Adler’s own writings, the narrative explores fundamentals of Individual Psychology such as striving for superiority, approaches to problem solving, social interest, and the importance of birth order. Three complete transcripts of early memory interpretation interviews, in turn, help readers to understand how these concepts are born out in real life contexts, and a series of eight exercises help readers to hone their interpretation skills.

With its practice exercises and expositions of Individual Psychology, this book fills an important gap in depth psychology by demonstrating how early memory interpretation fits squarely at the intersection of Adler’s personality theory and his therapeutic technique. By working their way through *Working Title*, readers can unlock the hidden meanings in their own recollections and in the recollections of friends, clients, and loved ones. In so doing, they can uncover hidden interests and talents, get a better grasp on entrenched habits they may have struggled for years to break, and cast a clearer vision for how to move forward with their lives.

Audience

In a world of rapidly accelerating change, increasing divisiveness, and climate crisis, people need a book that helps them to understand their inner approaches to problem-solving, their mistaken beliefs that may be holding them back, and their untapped wells of strength and talent that they can draw upon to improve their lives.

Working Title targets various audiences: Self-help readers who are seeking to make changes in their lives; behavioral health professionals who might incorporate early memory interpretation

into their practices with their patients/clients; life coaches and professional coaches; clergy; health and wellness aficionados who take a holistic approach to wellbeing; fans of depth psychology and personality theory; and fans of Adlerian psychology. This latter audience may include not only long-time followers of Individual Psychology (e.g. readers who purchased Hazelden's *Understanding Human Nature* and *What Life Could Mean to You*), but also readers whose interest has been recently piqued by the popular Adlerian book, *The Courage to be Disliked*.

Market

Working Title is the only book to present a complete exposition of Alfred Adler's unpublished technique of early memory interpretation as handed down directly from Adler. As such, it fills in a significant gap both in Adlerian scholarship, specifically, and in depth psychology and personality theory, in general. *Working Title*, moreover, has the potential to bring to the general public a powerful technique for personal transformation.

Competition

Kevin Leman has published the following three best-selling books:

Unlocking the Secrets of Your Childhood Memories. (Nashville: T. Nelson, 1989)

Unlocking the Secrets of Your Childhood Memories Workbook. (Nashville: T. Nelson, 1994)

What Your Childhood Memories Say about You... and What You Can Do About It. (Illinois: Tyndale House, 2007)

The Leman books draw heavily on Adlerian theory without acknowledging that the ideas come from Adler. *Working Title*, by contrast, recognizes Adler's intellectual authorship of early memory interpretation and explains how Adlerian personality theory goes hand in hand with such interpretation. Thus, *Working Title* offers its readers – to paraphrase Adler – a more robust understanding of human nature. The Leman books also lack many of the compelling elements of *Working Title* such as transcripts of full-length memory interpretations, an innovative variety of exercises for learning how to interpret memories, and practice with famous people's autobiographies.

Author Information

Ellen Alderton has more than thirty years of experience in professional writing with an emphasis in health education. She has worked as a research associate for the Bretton Woods Committee, served as a technical writer at the United Nations, and worked as a speech and marketing writer for the Peace Corps. She has also taught writing at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Marymount University.

Ellen spent four years executive-producing bilingual public education campaigns on topics ranging from mental health to HIV/AIDS, human biology, clinical trials, and nutrition and obesity for Hispanic Radio Network. In this capacity, she developed hundreds of educational radio programs that were broadcast in all Spanish-language radio markets across the across the

country. During this same time period, her public health pieces were published in the nationally syndicated Spanish-language newspaper column, "*La Columna Vertebral*."

Previously, she worked for Mental Health America where she helped to launch a technical assistance center tasked with advising grassroots mental health organizations across the country on capacity building. She also managed a one-year ten-site grant devoted to promoting cultural competency in mental healthcare.

In 1993, Ellen was analyzed and later trained by a practitioner of Adlerian psychology, Conrad Kaplan, who had learned Alfred Adler's unpublished memory interpretation technique from a personal student of Adler, Edith Foster. Ellen was then privileged to spend three days visiting Foster, at that time one of Adler's last living pupils. The two women took that opportunity to interpret each other's memories in the classic Adlerian style. In the subsequent years, Ellen has analyzed scores of early memories.

Ellen currently works as a freelance writer and editor for nonprofit organizations. She received her bachelor's degree in psychology, with honors, from Wellesley College and her master's degree in international relations from Johns Hopkins University. She has lived in nine countries and at different times in her life has spoken fluent French, German, Greek, Italian, and Spanish.