

The Courage to be Disliked Summary

By Ichiro Kishimi

Perhaps it's time for a much-needed change of perspective? Maybe we need to work harder on living for ourselves and not for other people?

The Courage to be Disliked is the bestselling sensation that tells us to stop living for others and start living for ourselves. Based on Adlerian psychology, we're shown how to be unapologetic about making authentic changes without compromise.

Being the person we want to be, takes courage, and the search for our authentic selves is an ongoing project. To strive towards self-actualization, we need to rid ourselves of past experiences and expectations. We also need to embrace the courage to change without feeling limited or scared of what could happen.

The Courage to be Disliked has sold over 3.5 million copies, and Ichiro Kishimi and Fumitake Koga have become household names in Asia. The book explains how we can apply Adlerian philosophies to contemporary life, in a bid to play a more active role in our lives, and exercise a greater sense of control.

Up until fairly recently, we've avoided discussing mental health in the West. Mental health and depression were taboo, and there has been a significant drive to focus on these issues a lot more. *The Courage to be Disliked* is groundbreaking because it offers a compelling counter-approach to the dominant Freudian and Jungian psychoanalysis.

We'll briefly look at how Alfred Adler's century-old theories can offer new debates into discussing and analyzing mental health. The authors structure the book using Socratic dialog, making the theories and arguments accessible and easy to follow. The result is an insightful and thought-provoking look into human agency and self-determination.

The Power To Change

Most of us have grown up with a deterministic view of the world.

We tend to believe that our identities are fixed, and that we're trapped in the person that we are. However, we have the power to change, and no matter what stage in life we're at, we can always grow and change. Despite what we think, our personalities are not fixed.

While our past does influence us, it's not the sole determinant of who we are. We often look at victims as products of their past, and we naturally assume that what's going on in the present, is related to the past. We have a cause and effect mentality that makes us think in specific ways, and this is reinforced by pop psychology which argues that our actions are based on trauma. For example, we assume that children will grow up in a certain way based on their current behavior and upbringing. The popular belief is also that psychological problems are heavily rooted in the past.

Adler argues that we all can break free from our past, and it doesn't have to determine our future. In short, we don't have to be governed by our past experiences and trauma. It's important to note that what we experience in the present moment is determined by a range of different factors. There isn't just one answer for everything. Our problems and

anxieties aren't fixed or determined by one event. The reasons behind how and why we feel, are fluid, and we can always change how we act and behave in everyday life.

We Accept the World As We See It

How do you feel about change?

Many of us resist change because we're used to the status quo. We also don't tend to alter our outlook on things because it's too much effort.

We have been indoctrinated into thinking in binaries. We're told that there's good and evil, hot and cold, light and dark. We're even categorized as either a dog or a cat person, or someone who experiences the world as glass half empty or half full. We see the world in black and white.

The thing is, intuitively, we know that the world isn't black and white. We know that there are grey areas, yet, we fall into the trap of having a very fixed outlook of the world. Humans don't fit neatly into categories; we're a lot messier than that. Our personalities aren't fixed, and the Adlerian belief is that instead of referring to personality traits, we should adopt the term "lifestyle."

This is because lifestyle reflects context and environment, and context and environment are significant determinants of how we experience the world and ourselves. Our worldviews come into play at about the age of ten, and they're a mixture of positive and negative experiences.

When we come into contact with negative people, we often believe that

they're actively trying to change their circumstances. However, Adler explains that if these people genuinely wanted to be happy, they'd change. He further argues that people are bound to familiarity because it brings comfort. This is the primary reason why we resist change. We have an inherent fear of the unknown, and we remain in our comfort zones.

The advice is that we have to have the courage to face the unknown and accept failure.

Nobody Is Perfect, So Why Do We Struggle With Imperfection?

Why do we try to be perfect when we know we can't be?

If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be? Did you struggle to pick just one thing?

All too often, our minor imperfections become our major focus. Our flaws can become crippling and spill over into all areas of our lives. So we actively pursue trying to fix ourselves because we believe that our flaws are the root of our unhappiness. The trouble is that no matter how hard we might think, fixing slight imperfections won't solve the more significant issues.

Our insecurities are our insecurities, and other people only see them when we draw attention to them. When we focus on the negative aspects of ourselves, that's what other people see. For example, if we isolate ourselves because we're scared of being judged on how we look, we will

end up being judged. But, we won't be judged for the reason we anticipate. We'll end up being evaluated for purposefully isolating ourselves. In *Daring Greatly*, Brené Brown says that we need to embrace our vulnerability and flaws, and that by doing this, we show true courage.

Comparisons Are Odious

Have you ever wished that you were more like somebody else?

We live in a competitive society. We've been taught to keep up with the Joneses, and now with social media, things are becoming increasingly complex.

There's a growing trend that we're never enough. We need to change this belief and adjust our attitudes to competition. There's nothing wrong with competition per se. Competition is how we make progress and reach our goals. However, competition also has a toxic side. Focusing on winning all the time, and being the best, causes a lot of undue stress and anxiety. Competition is another binary we've forced on ourselves because it results in either winning or losing. We've come to accept that losing makes us a failure; however, as we've learned, the only way we learn and grow is through failure.

So one way to make sure we're in control of our competitive nature is to set the right goals for ourselves. This comes down to being introspective about what we want from life. The truth is that success isn't a good measure of happiness because a lot of successful people aren't happy. The key is to realize that when we're competitive, we're single-minded and aren't focused on community or collaboration. We need to adjust our mindset to focus on being more collaborative and realize other people

aren't judging us or putting us down all the time. Most of the time, it's just our own fears around other people's perceptions that hold us back and prevent us from getting involved in all life has to offer.

Live for Yourself

True freedom is to be able to live by our own choices and decisions.

How often do you catch yourself doing things for other people's approval?

Approval-seeking behavior is something that we all succumb to at some stage or another. Our authors suggest that we abandon this behavior and shift the focus onto doing things for our own approval.

We should do things because we want to do them, not because we feel duty-bound. Doing things based on duty or loyalty aren't good reasons; they result in us living for other people.

For instance, why did you choose your particular life path or career?

Oftentimes we make these decisions based on our social context, and our families, peers, and friends can have a considerable influence on these choices. We need to be prepared to disappoint other people. That may be hard to accept, but for those at the back of the room, 'Are you prepared to disappoint your family, peers, and friends?'

The answer to this question should be an unequivocal and resounding "yes."

How you live your life should be determined by what you value and what you believe is right.

We all have our own set of values that we adhere to, and we need to live authentically. Our authors advise against getting involved too heavily in other people's lives. We aren't here to criticize or critique other people, and when we put too much pressure on others, they often turn to rebellion. Education is an excellent example of this. We've been led to believe that education should be based on reward and punishment. Again this binary teaches us that good behavior is rewarded, and bad behavior is punished. This value system is problematic because it means that you're either shamed or praised.

The authors give the example of children who receive poor marks at school. The knee-jerk reaction is to be stricter with them, but this seldom solves the problem. When we add pressure to a situation, things get a lot worse. Instead, we need to encourage individuals to take responsibility for their actions. This is a lot healthier because instead of meddling, this behavior encourages children to take agency in their learning. Although it's not as easy as applying pressure, the long-term effects are a generation of children who can learn independently and with maturity.

Being controlling is a sign that you're trying to push an agenda, whereas showing support indicates that you have best interests at heart. The bottom line is that we are all individuals, and while others may influence us, we are separate beings with our own free will. For this reason, we should all adopt the policy of favoring empathy over being controlling.

The Taming of the Ego

Every single one of us is part of humanity, and no one is superior to another.

So often we feel isolated and anxious, and we withdraw because we don't know where we fit in. Our authors argue that it's time to realize that we're all part of a global community, and that we're not alone.

Being part of a global community isn't just about being connected to other humans. We need to think more in terms of the planet and our influence on the world around us. Creating a greater sense of purpose means that we need to work for the benefit of the planet, rather than just for ourselves.

Caring about the world means that we will increase our value as global citizens. For a long time, we've been led to believe that we're the center of the universe, but this has no benefit on our psyche. Through encouraging reciprocity and generosity, we're more likely to be inspired to look at the bigger picture and find a greater purpose. We aren't owed anything; on the contrary, we owe the world around us. So dig deep and find out how you can change the world and make a positive impact.

In Conclusion

Happiness is a mindset, and we can alter how we view the world.

The crucial takeaway is that we have to become independent and shed ourselves of the need to compete with and compare ourselves to others. Rather than caring what others think, we should strive to foster a greater sense of our role in our community.

Every day we should wake up and ask ourselves, 'What can I do to make the world a better place?'

If we begin each day by assessing our contributions to the world, we abandon the mindset that the universe revolves around us. Instead, we need to be acutely aware that we're all equal and have an equal role to play in the world.

Finally, we need to abandon any sense that we're victims or that other people have an easier life than us. Life should be enjoyed, and we need to embrace living in the moment. Pay attention to the people around you because everyone is struggling. And while there will always be a handful of bullies and nasty people, most people are not like that. So step outside yourself, have the courage to set foot into the world, and live your life for your own authentic purpose.