STUDY GUIDE AND INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT
TO ACCOMPANY VIDEOTAPE
“PSYCHOTHERAPY WITH THE EXPERTS”
FEATURING JON CARLSON

Jon Carlson
Diane Kjos
Governors State University
University Park, IL
ADLERIAN THERAPY
with
Jon Carlson

Introduction
This video is one in a series portraying the leading theories of psychotherapy and their application. This series presents the predominant theories and how they are practiced. Each video in the series features a leading practitioner and educator in the field of counseling or psychotherapy. The series is unique in that it features real clients with real problems. During the course of the series these clients bring up a number of issues with the therapists.

A theory is a framework that helps us understand something or explains how something works. Just as there are many different people and personalities, there are different theories of understanding how people live and how change occurs, each with its own guidelines for understanding and procedures for operation. The primary differences between these theories are related to the relative importance each theory places on cognitive (thinking), behavioral (doing), and affective (feeling) factors. Each theory has devotees who think and act as the theory prescribes in order to help people change their lives. Certain theories explain certain phenomena better than others. The individual counselor or psychotherapist needs to develop his or her own approach to helping others with problems of an emotional, behavioral, or cognitive nature. Specific objectives in therapy include (1) removing, modifying, or retarding existing symptoms, (2) mediating disturbed patterns of behavior, and (3) promoting positive personality growth and development.

The video begins with a brief discussion with the practitioner concerning the theory. We then move to the actual counseling session. After the session,
Carlson discusses the session with Diane Kjos, and an audience made up of counselors, graduate students, and counselor educators.

Because the video series contains actual counseling interviews, professional integrity is required to protect the confidentiality of the clients who have courageously shared their personal lives with us.

**Purpose**

The series is designed for pre-professional training in graduate and undergraduate classes in counseling theory. Students will learn about the theory and watch a leading practitioner work with a client in a “first session” interview.

The series is also appropriate for workshops or individual study for the professional development of practicing counselors, social workers, clinical psychologists, or psychotherapists. Professionals will learn from the practitioner by gaining new ideas and insights which can be helpful in working with current or future clients.

**How to Use the Video**

1. As a *stand alone activity* for professional development or orientation to Adlerian Therapy. If you are using the video this way, it might be helpful to first read about Adlerian Therapy. See page 31 of this guide for a list of suggested readings. Or, you may wish to watch the video, read about the theory, and then watch the video a second time.

   As you watch the video, note the questions included on the enclosed test. This will help you identify key points related to this theory. If you wish continuing education credit, complete the test and submit it as directed.

2. As an *integral part of a course in counseling theory* with the textbook, student study guide, and instructor’s guide. The text by Jon Carlson and Diane
Kjos (1998), *Introduction to Counseling and Psychotherapy*, Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon with accompanying *Study Guide to Counseling and Psychotherapy*, and *Instructor’s Guide to Introduction to Counseling and Psychotherapy*, published by Allyn & Bacon of Needham Heights, Massachusetts, are coordinated with the videotapes and can assist in guiding the student through the learning process, including key concepts, application, and techniques.

3. **As an adjunct in classes** to demonstrate a practical application of Adlerian Therapy or to demonstrate specific interventions and techniques. Guidelines and suggested discussion topics will be included in Carlson and Kjos (1998), *Instructor’s Guide to Introduction to Counseling and Psychotherapy*, Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

4. **As a basis for a series of class sections or a workshop** for either professional development or counselor education. You may choose to use all or parts of the video to support specific teaching objectives. Suggestions for scheduling, discussion questions, and other activities will be included in Carlson and Kjos (1998), *Instructor’s Guide to Introduction to Counseling and Psychotherapy*, Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

**Adlerian Therapy with Jon Carlson**

Jon Carlson, Psy.D., Ed.D., is a professor of Psychology and Counseling at Governors State University in University Park, Illinois, and a psychologist in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. He is a fellow of the American Psychological Association, a Diplomate in Family Psychology of the American Board of Professional Psychology, and holds a certificate in psychotherapy from the Alfred Adler Institute in Chicago. He has authored 25 books, and over 100 professional articles and served as editor of *Individual Psychology: The Journal of Adlerian Theory, Research, and Practice* for almost 20 years. His is currently editor of *The Family*
Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families, one of the producers of this video series as well as a forthcoming series titled Family Therapy with the Experts which is also being published by Allyn & Bacon.

Learning Objectives

1. Identify theoretical concepts which are descriptive of Adlerian Therapy.
2. Recognize specific interventions or techniques related to Adlerian Therapy.
3. Describe the range of applications of Adlerian Therapy.

Abstract of Adlerian Therapy Video

This video is approximately 114 minutes long and is divided into three parts:
Part II: An initial therapy session with Jon Carlson and Gina, in which Jon demonstrates Adlerian assessment techniques such as “early memories” and helps Gina gain some helpful insight into how she deals with issues in her life (44 minutes).
Part III: Discussion of the therapy session with Jon Carlson, Diane Kjos, and a panel of human service professionals and graduate students (45 minutes).

Transcript

TH 1 Well, why don’t we get started, Gina.
CL 1 Okay.
TH 2 I’ve been wanting to meet you for a while.
CL 2 Thank you.
TH 3 I’ve watched you come in and out of our set and haven’t had a chance to talk with you, and I really appreciate you filling out the forms. [You’re welcome] I
had you fill out all that paperwork, [You’re welcome] and let me kind of summarize what I learned from those and see if it makes sense. [ok] If I understand things right you are kind of in a transition right now.

CL 3 Mhm.

TH 4 You’re moving from being married too, you’ve divorced now.

CL 4 Mhm.

TH 5 The divorce is final?

CL 5 Yes. Yes it is.

TH 6 So you are a single mom.

CL 6 Yes.

TH 7 Two sons.

CL 7 Yes.

TH 8 Okay, and you are kind of moving into the last year of the thirty somethings.

CL 8 Yes. Yes, I am.

TH 9 And then you indicated that in your family of origin there were four children, and you are the oldest.

CL 9 Yes, I am.

TH 10 And there’s what, three girls and one boy.

CL 10 Two girls and two boys.

TH 11 Two girls and two boys. So the two oldest . . .

CL 11 Are girls.

TH 12 Are girls, and the last two are boys. [The youngest are boys, yeah.] Okay. Well, coming in today did you have any ideas what you wanted to talk about today? Were there any issues or anything going on in your life right now that’s challenging for you?

CL 12 Um, every day is challenging actually. Um, nothing really pressing or
anything like that, it’s just [mhm] the last couple of weeks or so I’ve had conversations with family members and friends, and this overlying theme of amusement park keeps coming up [mhm] with your choice of rides that you would choose to ride on. You have people that ride the merry-go-round, and you have people that ride the roller coaster, and we’ve been talking in those terms, [mm] and it’s really amazing how, my mother told me about this a couple of weeks ago, and I’ve been using it so much the last two weeks talking with my friends and just, my mom, it’s really amazing how it’s real true.

TH 13  So, it’s like a metaphor for . . .

CL 13  Kind of. What we were saying is that you can exist in life, or you can live life. Those people that go on merry-go-rounds just go around and around and around and around. There is no excitement, there is no fear, there are no challenges. It is just existing. Going around. [mhm] But then you have those people like me that like roller coasters, and you know that they are scary, you know that you have that moment where you are going to close your eyes and say why did I, did I, do this, but yet you kind of expect it, [mhm] and you kind of thrive on it, and each time you go on a roller coaster it’s not the same. It’s different. [ah] Even though you know the turns are coming, something else could be a little different. You get more people on, less people on. They speed it up or slow it down, and you know, it’s more like living.

TH 14  Whereabouts are you right now on the roller coaster?

CL 14  Oh, I’m going back on for more rides. I will keep riding.

TH 15  Ok, are you more up or more down these days?

CL 15  Up, up, up, up. Definitely.

TH 16  Up. I mean like on a scale from 1 to 10 with 1 as at the top, let’s make it 10 at the top and 1's at the bottom.

CL 16  9.5. No very up. [ok] Very up.
TH 17  So these are really good days for you.
CL 17  Yes, [mhm] they are. Yeah.
TH 18  Yeah. I would like to see if I could understand you a little bit more [ok] and maybe if I could ask you a couple of questions [sure] that might help me to do that. Now if I understand it, you are the oldest.
CL 18  Yes, I am.
TH 19  And your sister is one year younger. Can you go back to when you were 12?
CL 19  Okay. That’s not that long ago, but no, yeah.
TH 20  Just like yesterday.
CL 20  Yeah.
TH 21  What kind of a kid were you?
CL 21  Busy.
TH 22  You were busy?
CL 22  Um, if I go back exactly to 12 I can start my life there?
TH 23  Yeah, like fifth grade, sixth grade, around that time.
CL 23  Okay. Um, I liked school. I enjoyed spending time with my family. Um, I had a younger brother who I adored. He was two at the time. He’s ten years younger than I am, and he was, I kind of took him like my child even though I knew he was my brother, but I used to take care of him. We got along pretty good as a family, but we argued. The kids argued. Um, we were vying for position, and who was going to be in charge and who was going to be the leader and follower and things like that.
TH 24  Then your sister was right behind you.
CL 24  Yes.
TH 25  Is it Angel?
CL 25  Angeli.
TH 26 What kind of a kid was she?

CL 26 Um, amusing. She kept us laughing a lot. She um, was a performer. [ok] And she wasn’t as I want to say rooted, but that’s not a good word. Where I’m very steady and stable, she’s kind of flighty and everywhere, not, you know, not saying like an airhead, but she was a little looser. She would do things probably more spontaneously than I did. I had to have things planned out and did things, and she would, something would hit her and she would do it at that moment.

TH 27 Mhm. And you’re more serious?

CL 27 Yeah, I’m more serious. Yeah.

TH 28 And then you had another brother who is three years younger.

CL 28 Yes.

TH 29 Seville?

CL 29 Seville. Mhm.

TH 30 And what kind of a kid was he back when he was like 9? You were 12.

CL 30 Um, kind of quiet. He wasn’t super athletic, um, but he liked to be outside and play and things like that. He liked playing Monopoly and mind games and chess and checkers and things like that. [mhm] He didn’t argue that much with me and my sister. We sort of just took over, and he did whatever we made him do. One time we left him hanging upside down in a tree and went to go get pillows and stuff to rescue him, and finally my sister went and got my dad because we knew we were in trouble. We figured we better get him out before he falls so, and that was like around, he was 9, we were about 11 or 12, so . . .

TH 31 Okay, and the three of you were pretty much one family and then your youngest brother was a lot younger.

CL 31 Yes, he came ten years after . . .

TH 32 Yeah. So, he probably didn’t have a lot to do with your development.

CL 32 Well, in a way he did [oh] because at first when my mother told me she
was pregnant I was seriously upset with her. I was mad.

TH 33  Really?

CL 33  Yeah, because that meant another little person that I had to take care of and watch and spend time with and worry about. So I was quite angry with my mother.

TH 34  You were more concerned with the effect it was going to have on you [mhm] in terms of . . .

CL 34  Mhm. Absolutely. Until I felt the baby move inside her, and then I didn’t let up. I still was mad, [mhm] but not as mad, and then when my brother was born it was like I forgot about being mad. I wasn’t mad anymore. [mhm] By me being 10 years old I could hold him when my other brother and sister couldn’t, even though my feet were sticking out on the couch, I couldn’t sit up all the way. But I was able to do things with him you know, I took on a mother role which kind of, I always knew I wanted to be a mother, [ok] and that gave me a chance to do that, so that in a way, he really did have an influence on my life, [ok] more so than my brother or sister as far as being a mom and responsible and things like that, yeah.

TH 35 It is my guess that the older children, though, had more to do with how you became the person that you are. In other words, how you chose to be the mom rather than Angeli choosing to be the mom or your brother choosing to be the mom. I looked at one of the forms you checked out, and you saw yourself amongst your siblings as being, one who is the hardest worker, got the best grades in school, helped around the house the most, was the most obedient, tried to please others, was considerate, the best athlete, had high aspirations. You sound a lot like an oldest child to me.


TH 36 That’s sort of the way you’ve carried on into your adult life, too, [yes] with high aspirations. [yes] Trying to please others, trying to do what’s right.
CL 36  Yes, yes. That’s a big one. [mhm] Yeah, definitely.

TH 37  And how have you done?

CL 37  Well, hm. I don’t try to please others as much anymore like I used to.
[mhm] I still have aspirations, but they’re not controlling me because I’ve kind of
gotten to where I want to be, so now I’m kind of sitting back and enjoying where I
am with maybe a few small plans in the future, you know, coming up. Um, I’m still
athletic. I’m still keeping busy. [mhm] I am probably the one that’s most
responsible because I’m the one that has the two children. [mhm] So, I’m not that
different than when I was a kid.

TH 38  Well, what’s your sister like these days?

CL 38  She’s divorced. No children. She’s single.

TH 39  So, both of you are divorced.

CL 39  Yes, both of us are divorced. And she is starting her own business, and she
is enjoying it immensely, and she is becoming like me in a way being serious,
responsible, goal oriented. But yet she still has that spontaneity [mhm] to her that I
don’t think is ever going to leave. [yeah] I don’t think it’s ever going to leave.
Sometime I’m like how can you do what you do when I know you don’t plan, but
I can see her planning things. She’s gotten neater and more organized in her own
way. [mhm] She still has these clutters of things around, but she knows exactly
where to go in that clutter to get what she needs.

TH 40  And have you gone the other way?

CL 40  I’ve gotten a little more spontaneous. [mhm] It’s still a little tough. It’s still
hard to be it completely, um, but yeah, I’ve gotten a little less organized, a little
more clutter. If I don’t get this done right away, I don’t worry about it too much.
So, yeah, a little bit.

TH 41  And how about your brother?

CL 41  The oldest boy?
TH 42 Yeah. Uh huh.

CL 42 Um, he’s still quiet. He still stays to himself a lot. Um. He’s not, I think he’s still being led around a little bit, um, like we did. He is unsure of himself right now, a little scared to make some decisions in his life.

TH 43 Who is leading him around?

CL 43 I want to say his girlfriend, [mhm] but I really don’t think it’s her. I just, nobody right now, and maybe that’s why he is so lost cause there is nobody stepping in like he’s accustomed to, you know, so, because she’s not leading him around, you know, but yeah. I think he might be waiting for somebody to take the lead. It might even be himself, you know, but for some things to say, oh look, this is the way you’ve gotta go now. So, cause he is unemployed now, and he is trying to decide what he wants to do. Both of my brothers at this point are unemployed trying to decide what they want to do with their lives, and it’s tougher for them because they are males. [yeah] And their position in society is a lot different, [mhm] so it’s tough for them, I know.

TH 44 What was your dad like?

CL 44 Mm, my dad. Um, my dad was a very responsible man. He worked two jobs to take care of his family. [mhm] He loved his kids. He showed affection. He gave us hugs and kisses. Um, he was proud of us. Um, he respected my mother even though there were times when they didn’t get along and they didn’t agree on things. They only raised their voices. [mhm] There was no violence. There was no hitting or anything like that. [mhm] There was a time out. My dad sometimes was sad I think because he had to work so much, and he felt unappreciated at different times.

TH 45 If you had to give three adjectives to describe your dad, what words would you use?

CL 45 Okay. Responsible, outgoing, and loving.
TH 46  Mhm. Responsible, outgoing, and loving. [Yeah] Okay. And I notice that as you thought about your dad there was kind of some emotion that came up around the part that he wasn’t appreciated.

CL 46  Yeah, mhm. Because I’ve been that way too. [mhm] Meaning that I’ve not been appreciated. And on the other side too I know my mom hasn’t been appreciated. You know one of the problems I had with my marriage I think is that I tried to make it last like my parents’ marriage. They’ve been married forty years now.

TH 47  Oh, wow.

CL 47  Yeah, yeah. And I kind of wanted the same thing too, and that is one of the reasons why I probably stayed in it as long as I did because I wanted to make it work like theirs worked, yet as I got older, I knew that there were problems within the marriage. I knew that they weren’t happy with things that the other did, because I was in a unique position being the oldest I guess. Having a lot in common with my parents, being married, having children, and things like that, that at different times they would confide in me and tell me different things. So, I would get a chance to see both sides of the story, and as much as I would love to bring them together, cause I would know what it would take to fix what’s wrong, I can’t do that. I can’t do that. It has to happen between the two of them.

TH 48  What would it take, what would it take?

CL 48  Oh, I can’t. I couldn’t. I can’t change how they are. They have to do that themselves. You know, but I can be the ear. I can listen in and just be there for that purpose. Because that’s all they really need.

TH 49  And then you said, mom, you said she was unappreciated as well.

CL 49  Yeah.

TH 50  Is that like a family value. [mm] I mean the three of you share that.

CL 50  Yeah, I think so. You know it may even trickle down to my brothers and
sister. I don’t know. I haven’t talked to them about that. [mhm] But yeah, I think we all had, the three of us had a conversation about not being appreciated, [mhm] taken for granted, you know, but all three of us don’t necessarily need that pat on the back all the time. It’s just something, just a little bit of recognition. [mhm] You know. And it is funny because I know when, my mother just told me, not recently, but within a few years, that she did not know that I had the desire to be in the top ten in my graduating class in high school. She didn’t have that expectation. She just wanted me to do the best I could, but later as I was finishing up high school, she saw that, and she said years later that I really did not have a clue that that’s what you wanted. If I had known that I would have you know been more supportive. Although she was never not supportive, but that appreciation, that pat on the back. So, it’s funny that even though she didn’t get the pat on the back sometimes, she in turn did the same thing with me. It is like a cycle that we all kind of go through.

TH 51 Is there, is there sort of a thing that people don’t understand one another or what other people need?

CL 51 No, I think it’s a selfishness. I think we get so involved with what we are doing we tend to forget sometimes the little simple things to say. We get, my mother, my father, and myself, we all are work oriented. We are not workaholics, but we enjoy our work. We put a lot into it, and it sometimes controls what we do, and that stops us from seeing things sometimes when we should.

TH 52 So your success at work and at your career takes a toll on relationships.

CL 52 Mhm. Yeah, it does. A little bit. Yeah, it does.

TH 53 Uh huh. And leaves you not being able to appreciate other people?

CL 53 Yeah, but I think what . . .

TH 54 And not feeling appreciated yourself? Kind of like you get what you give?

CL 54 Mhm, in a way. But it’s, I think I put myself so much into work because of
my need to make sure I’m successful. [mhm] That I don’t put as much work in other things like relationships. [mhm] When I look back at my marriage, I really, I worked at it. I’m not saying I didn’t, but I could have focused it a little bit differently. I went into it not really knowing anything about what marriage really involves and relationships and things like that. [really] And I don’t want to do that again.

TH 55 Well, where did you learn about marriage from? You said you didn’t know much, but you must have learned some things.

CL 55 Well, I watched my parents, you know, and I know what’s in my heart, what I really wanted our togetherness to become.[mm] So that kind of got at me. I love him tremendously, and that was I thought enough to carry it through.

TH 56 But sometimes that broke down for you and for your sister, and . . .

CL 56 Yeah.

TH 57 And your brothers aren’t married either.

CL 57 No, not yet. My youngest got engaged recently. But, my older brother still hasn’t. He’s scared I think. But yeah, it, I mean I’m not saying marriage is a job, but in a way it is because there are different roles and different expectations that you have within that, and if you don’t address those and deal with them, then they become problems, and then they just build up more and more. And I think what I would like to do, if I did it all over again, be friends first and lovers later because friendship you have a lot more to stand on because that’s the foundation for a lot of things like communicating and trust and, and all those things that are necessary in relationships that somehow didn’t work it’s way out of my marriage.

TH 58 Were you friends, were your parents friends?

CL 58 No, hm mm. I think they went head over heels for each other. When I think about it, yeah.

TH 59 That doesn’t last very long does it? I mean the head over heels.
CL 59  Well, no, but they, no it doesn’t. No it doesn’t last that long. It feels good and all of that, and it should happen in spurts, but as a foundation for a marriage, it takes a lot of work if you are going to only have that. It’s possible. Yeah. It is possible, but once that initial head over heels, it depends on the two people. [mhm] How they are as people. If they are happy with themselves. [mhm] If they are willing to work and spend the time at it. If they are willing to say it’s my fault as much as it is yours or mine more this time than yours and dually share and work at it, then that can be enough to make that head over heels last.
TH 60  So it sounds like you got a lot of good ideas how to approach a second serious relationship.
CL 60  I think I do.
TH 61  Or the last final, you know, the last relationship.
CL 61  Yeah, I never thought about it as the last relationship. That’s true. When you think about it. Right now, I don’t want to think about any relationship, but, yeah, that’s nice.
TH 62  Tell me a little bit about your mom. What’s she like?
CL 62  Oh, my mom. Um, hm. She is very dedicated. She is very protective. She is possessive of her family. [mm] She has a kindness to her. [mhm] She has this all-knowing aura about her that, that is really comforting later. It’s like she knows certain things, but she won’t say it. She’ll wait and let us go through the experience and bump our head, and cut ourselves, and then when we come back and talk about it, then she can say, I knew that was going on but I couldn’t say anything because even if I had said it, it wouldn’t have made a difference. You wouldn’t have listened to me. And she’s right. I didn’t. She told me many, many things, but I ain’t listening to her. She’s stubborn and so am I. She is definitely stubborn, but I like that though.
TH 63  Ok, and you said she’s dedicated to her family.
CL 63  Oh yeah.

TH 64  Are you still close to mom?

CL 64  Yes. For a while I wasn’t. [mhm] For a while I wasn’t.

TH 65  What does close mean to you, like how often do you contact her?

CL 65  Oh we talk two times, okay there will be times when we’ll miss like a week or two, but then we will make up for it like an hour or two on the phone. So, I mean they still live in the city, so I see them at least every couple of weeks or so, and I talk to them on a weekly basis both my mom and my dad and my brothers and sister, but there was a time when I didn’t do that.

TH 66  When was that?

CL 66  When I was married. [oh] When I was married. He did not like my family that much, and my family did not like him that much.

TH 67  Really?

CL 67  So that was a big problem.

TH 68  Did it begin that way?

CL 68  Yeah. Kind of it did. For my mom it did. [mhm] My sister and brothers were open to him at first because they are my brothers and sister. They’re like me, but my mother is wiser, more experienced. Can see things differently. She is not in it like I am. My brothers and sister were so close they were in it, so we all see the same thing. So, yeah, it was sticky in the beginning.

TH 69  Did they come to your wedding?

CL 69  Yes, they did, but we had big arguments about the wedding and things like that too. [mhm] So, yeah. I had forgotten about all of that. All the signs were there, no, no, no, but I was determined to prove everyone wrong, to prove that I had enough love to make this work and that it would be okay. [mhm] To be like my mom and dad, [sure] you know, but later I found out in the marriage mom and dad weren’t all that great either, so I was like what am I trying to work for? But
what I gradually found out was how all relationships are. All relationships go up and down, you know, so . . .

TH 70  Sure. So you took a big step there early on and went against your parents and didn’t please them by, and then you stayed away from them for quite a while?
CL 70  Well, we had, I didn’t spend as much time with my parents during the marriage. Um, there were times where I, well we did at first, but my ex-husband, he didn’t feel comfortable with that. And so to please him and to make him feel like I am putting him as number one in my life, um, I started backing away from my family, spending less time with them. And then some holidays we would miss a holiday, and then we wouldn’t talk, and I went a whole year almost without talking to my family to prove my love for him and that I really did care and that it wasn’t them, you know, and . . .

TH 71  Did he appreciate that?
CL 71  Did he appreciate it? No. He didn’t. Which is why I shouldn’t have did it. Because it was the wrong thing to do. But I thought it was at the time.

TH 72  So then you kind of ended up not getting much good feedback from either your mom and dad, family, or him?
CL 72  No. [mm] No. And that’s right around the time, is that right about the time, right when I started thinking about getting counseling then I think.

TH 73  How would you describe yourself today if you had to use some words?
CL 73  Some words? [yeah, Gina is . . ] Oh wow, this is a good time because I just talked to my mom yesterday,had a good hour and a half conversation. First word that pops into my mind is positive. [Uh huh] Definitely positive. Um, outgoing, [mhm] determined. Determined definitely, um . . .

TH 74  And where is that determination directed these days?
CL 74  My happiness.

TH 75  What does that look like?
CL 75 Oh, it’s good.

TH 76 What does happiness look like?

CL 76 What is happiness, happiness is being able, is . . .

TH 77 Where are you headed?

CL 77 Ok, I am headed toward, that’s interesting, I don’t know where I’m headed. I’m just headed, I’m going that way, but to live, to take the good and the bad that comes every day and to live with it. [mhm] To fix it when you can fix it, and to leave it alone when you can’t fix it. [mm] To have faith and trust.

TH 78 Mhm, yeah, that’s pretty vague. Can you get a little more specific to what you think that happiness looks like, you’re determined to get to? Does it involve another marriage?

CL 78 Not now. Not now. Eventually, I think yes. I think I’ll be with someone. I don’t know if I’ll marry that person or not.

TH 79 So it involves another committed relationship?

CL 79 Yeah. Yes. Eventually.

TH 80 Continue to work as a teacher?

CL 80 Yes, absolutely. Absolutely because I love that immensely. I do. [mhm] I couldn’t do anything else but. I love it too much. To continue raising my boys and being there for them but letting go little by little because they are getting older [sure] and need to make decisions on their own. Um, happiness is watching them grow, watching them go from being angry and upset and not being able to control things to be able to figure it out and to laugh and to make plans of their own now and to make their own decisions. To be able to be in the middle between two divorced parents who don’t like each other very much and still come out to be okay. That’s happiness definitely for me, to see them be able to do that because it’s not easy for them, but to see them able to go between the two and still be okay. That’s, that’s very good for me to see that cause that is why I didn’t get divorced
right away, because I didn’t want to do it for the children. So happiness was being a teacher, eventually having a relationship with someone, um, [mhm] eventually leading maybe to a commitment, and then my children [ok] and their goals.

TH 81 So this positive, outgoing, determined, good parent, who is that more like, your mom or your dad? Which one are you more like?

CL 81 My dad. I’m more like my dad. But as I get older, I am looking a little bit more like my mom. I do have a lot of both of them in me.

TH 82 Sure.

CL 82 I do. Um, the difference between my mom and I immediately I think of is that I had the support of my husband when I was pursuing my career. My mom did not have that support from my dad. That was one of the snags [mhm] in the marriage.

TH 83 So that was one of the things you and your ex-husband agreed on, your career?

CL 83 Oh yeah, that was fine, for me to, yeah. Yeah, it was perfectly fine for me to go ahead. He never said no don’t do this or anything like that, [mhm], you know, and so that was definitely one difference.

TH 84 Well, let me ask you just another question. I’m kind of moving around here with different questions, [that’s fine] and sometimes this is a real helpful question, and sometimes it doesn’t go anywhere, [ok] but if you could think back, as far back as you can remember. Maybe age 4 or age 5, really early. [ok] The earliest recollection that you can remember. You know, something that, for whatever reason, just stands out in your mind. Not something that somebody told you, but you know, something that . . .

CL 84 Mhm. You know it’s very interesting. It is hard to do that. It’s hard to go back. I thought of an incident that has totally nothing to do with relationships, but I remember being in kindergarten when Kennedy died.
TH 85  So you were five?

CL 85  Yeah. And I thought he was in our school, that’s where he died. People said oh he died, and I said oh, and I thought he was in our school office, and I remember sitting in the playhouse, and my legs were folded, and I remember holding my hands, and I remember that I was scared because I didn’t know what was going on, and I thought somebody had died in the school, and then I started thinking about my parents, and that’s all I can, but later I found out that he didn’t die in the school. It was some place else, but . . .

TH 86  So you were sitting, [yeah], your legs are folded [mhm].

CL 86  I remember sitting in there while everyone was talking about it and going through whatever they were going through.

TH 87  What’s the most vivid part of that? The part that really you can clearly see right now?

CL 87  Sitting in that playhouse by myself. [mhm] I don’t know why I did that. I think I just ran, I don’t know if I ran or walked there, but I remember sitting there and hearing everybody talk about it, and seeing the teacher cry, and maybe I thought I did something wrong that made the teacher cry because at that point I liked that kindergarten teacher. She was like mom, so you know . . .

TH 88  And how did you feel at that time, at that moment you’re in the playhouse?

CL 88  I was a little scared.

TH 89  Scared.

TH 89  I didn’t know what was going on.

TH 90  Can you think of another one? Another early memory like that?

CL 90  When I was scared.

TH 91  Well, it doesn’t need to be scared. Just something that for whatever reason you remember. Four, five, six.

CL 91  I remember third grade, eight or nine.
TH 92 That’s close.

CL 92 I was in the kitchen and my mom was cooking, and we were working on our times tables, and I was writing them on the window because she was cooking and the windows were getting steamed up with condensation, and I started learning my times. I learned my nines that day. Real quick and simple. And while she was cooking we were going through the times tables. She would ask me this and I would tell her that and everything and she showed me how when you look on the left hand column it starts out 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and then on the right hand column it goes 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, and I just remember, and I don’t know what we ate for dinner that day, but I do remember I was by the kitchen window learning my times tables. [sure] I was about eight or nine.

TH 93 Uh huh. And what’s the most vivid part of that?

CL 93 I remember feeling good about learning it so easily [mhm] and just being in that, it’s just the whole effect, being there. [uh huh] It just felt being in the kitchen with my mom and she’s cooking. [mhm] I’m doing this and I like that. It was that whole, and I got it. I mean I got it. I knew it. I went to school the next day. I got it, I got it, you know and I was real happy about that, real happy about that.

TH 94 Ok. How about another one, a little earlier.

CL 94 Mm. My brothers and sister. We were in the basement. I think I was six maybe, first grade, [mhm] second grade, somewhere around there. We had all these boxes. I don’t know where these boxes came from but we were stacking them up to make this temple, and I was going to be the queen, right? So I’d climb on top of these boxes, and I made my brothers and sister help me build this right, [mhm] but I wasn’t going to let them climb on top. This was for me. I was going to be the queen for the day. And they were really high, and the next thing I know they started moving and rocking and a couple started falling. My brother and sister left. They just left. Left me up there all by myself ready to fall. I was holding onto
the pipe, and I was like screaming their names and eventually I did fall, but I fell through the boxes and I was okay. But I was mad at them. But, and I think they got me back for being a real bossy person that day. I think that was what I was doing. But I remember that. We did not do that again. We did not build those boxes up again. We did not play queen for the day or anything like that. [uh huh] No, didn’t do that again.

TH 95  Didn’t do that again. So when you think of these different memories [mhm] you have, do you see any patterns or do you see anything that stands out to you, being in the playhouse, legs folded, the one in the kitchen with mom learning your times tables, and then this last one, [mhm] queen of the hill.

CL 95  Um, recognition and independence are two words that popped in my head when you said that. [mhm] Independent and being able to do my times tables and learn them, even though I had to have help from my mom, [mhm] but the recognition of being queen for the day and to be able to do things that were good [mhm] and independent. I was alone in that playhouse. [sure] I didn’t go to anybody. [mhm] I handled it, I wanted to handle it within myself, and I do that as an adult now. [mhm] And sometimes it’s funny, because my counselor says okay there you go. You are trying to fix this yourself again. [hm] Like I was trying to fix what was wrong with President Kennedy dying. [mhm] I thought I’ll go here and figure this out and straighten this out or whatever, and I couldn’t do that by myself. I didn’t even understand what was going on. [mhm] But I guess that’s where I think about handling things on my own and working towards some sort of recognition. [mhm] Like going to school with the times tables, being queen for the day, [mhm] you know, those . . .

TH 96  It’s an interesting pattern.

CL 96  Yeah.

TH 97  They say that we remember these, we have these recollections out of all
the millions of things that [mhm] happen to us, we just remember a few, [yeah] and it’s the way we remember them that’s really important.

CL 97 Wow. It is difficult for me to think back that far, but . . .

TH 98 And these stand out because there seems to be at least a pattern with a couple of them [mhm] in which when there is conflict and problems, you’re all alone, [mhm] and you’ve got to figure it out by yourself.

CL 98 Yes.

TH 99 And it sounds sort of like you’ve got to look out for yourself because there isn’t anybody looking out for you.

CL 99 Mhm, mhm. With being in the top ten, I didn’t tell my parents I was doing that. I just did it on my own. Yeah, there’s a definite pattern.

TH 100 Yes.

CL 100 Yeah, there is.

TH 101 And that kind of goes back to what you were talking about before, about this having a hard time appreciating somebody else, [mhm] and then kind of . . .

CL 101 Nobody’s helping me do it then yeah, why should I appreciate somebody else [yeah] when I am doing it all by myself [wow] which is going to make it difficult to be in a relationship with someone.

TH 102 And the next step.

CL 102 In the next step, yeah it is. Because I am very selfish, I know that. I can adamantly say very selfish right now, and, but I know that . . .

TH 103 It’s almost selfish to a fault it sort of sounds like.

CL 103 Yes. Yes. Yes. Yeah.

TH 104 Is there any way you are working on this now?

CL 104 Mhm, mhm.

TH 105 Can you give me an example of what you are doing to . .

CL 105 I’m being honest with it first of all, [uh huh] to know that I really am
doing this on purpose. It’s not you know done by accident. [sure] Being able to admit it and deal with it face front is the first step I think, [mhmm] in knowing how to deal with it. Next, after I admit it I don’t beat myself up about it. I know this is a transition that I’m going through because of my past, and I also know that it’s not how I really am, [mhmm] you know, completely. But it’s going to for a while.

TH 106 If you were to pick an area in your life for you to work on your selfishness, [mhmm] and since we talked about relationships, and [mhmm] you mentioned that you don’t get along with your ex-husband, [mhmm] is there any way you could picture yourself working on selfishness and how it effected that relationship and maybe putting some closure on that?

CL 106 Okay. In regards with my ex-husband?

TH 107 Uh huh.

CL 107 When I am through being angry for little things and I can totally look at what I did in the marriage and the marriage itself and even him as something that was good for me to do, um, then I eventually can maybe have an acquaintance with him. I don’t want to say, I’m not really angry, angry anymore, [sure] but there are still some areas that I have to work on.

TH 108 So what do you think would happen right now if you were to say something to him like . . .


TH 109 Oh wow?

CL 109 It’s something I know I have to work on, yeah.

TH 110 If you were to say something to him like I’m really learning a lot about myself [mhmm] and maybe because of the way I was raised I had to take care of myself [mhmm] and look out for myself too much, and [and in turn I didn’t spend time] wasn’t as thoughtful and considerate to your needs as I meant to be, [mhmm] and I’m sorry for that part in our relationship.
CL 110 Well, I don’t know if I’m sorry for that. I’m sorry for, I am sorry for a point of being that independent and being that headstrong and determined [mhm] because I think what happened, and I could tell him this. This I actually could tell him when I think about it, I would sit down and tell him, I would apologize for being very headstrong and determined in my career and in other things that we did together as husband and wife because I think from my doing all of that I pushed him out of being able to do those things [mhm] so that the very thing that I wanted him to be, a responsible man, I took that away from him by being the responsible man. I took on his role, and I didn’t really plan on doing that. It was just something that I was doing for me, but I got good at it, and I guess it was well why should I bother doing this when she is going to do this, and I think I hindered him in some of his growth and development in doing things because I just jumped in and started doing it, [mhm] and that I could actually go and tell, I am sorry for that. This drive I have from being a [sure] little kid to fix things and to be . . .

TH 111 What would you have done differently? I mean it sounds like you put all of that drive into one area, into career, into work, into . . .

CL 111 I probably would have, if I could do it again, I would step back from responsibilities of the home and to devote more time maybe to him, because he was a needy person. He needed things, attention, and I thought I was giving it to him, but he says I wasn’t, and now looking back at how . . .

TH 112 What do you think he wanted that he wasn’t getting? What do you think was missing?

CL 112 Happiness.

TH 113 How would you give him happiness?

CL 113 Well, I couldn’t. But allow him to find it himself.

TH 114 How would you do that?

CL 114 By letting him mess up. Allow him his mistakes [mhm] and to go forward
from there.

TH 115 Mhm. You didn’t do that?
CL 115 Mm-mm. I tried to fix things.
TH 116 So you weren’t like your mom?
CL 116 No, I was my dad.
TH 117 Your dad.
CL 117 My dad took care of everything.
TH 118 Right.
CL 118 Still does in a way, so I jumped up and started doing it.

TH 119 Mhm. How can you let go of that? That sounds like it’s a pretty tall order. It sounds like it really requires that you have to put yourself in somebody else’s shoes for a while.

CL 119 I’m tired of doing it all the time. Why, and then looking back I think why do I have to do this all the time. Wait a minute, this is not my problem. So I think self-preservation is making me step back [mhm] and not do so much. It’s hard. [sure] I have to fix things. It’s something I’m working on.

TH 120 You have to or . . .
CL 120 I’m so used to . . .

TH 121 I choose to.
CL 121 Yeah. And I really should not choose to fix things all the time.

TH 122 Are there times that you choose not to fix things?
CL 122 Mhm.

TH 123 Can you give me an example of that?

CL 123 Sometimes with my children, the problems that they go through with each other like when they are bickering or fighting between each other. I would step right in hey, no, no, I want you brothers to love each other. I step back and let them duke it out sometimes. Well, they don’t duke it out really, but I mean I let
them deal with it.

TH 124 What do you tell yourself then?

CL 124 I’m doing the right thing. [uh huh] I keep convincing, you’re doing the right thing. You have to do this. You have to do this. You can’t step in because it’s going to happen two weeks from now, a month from now. They have to make the adjustment.

TH 125 Somehow there is a little button that you push, [mhm] and you push that button . . .

CL 124 And I just sit back. Yep. And it’s physically hard sometimes. I remember one time I did it, [yeah] and I just sat in the chair and I kept my arms folded just so I wouldn’t jump in, [mhm] and [ok] you know they did work it out. [Okay] And they are still working out things.

TH 126 So that’s successful. And then you can think of a time with your husband where you just pushed a different button.

CL 126 Mhm, mhm, and I, and I still do that now with certain things.

TH 127 Give me an example where you . . .

CL 127 Oh, uh, my son is getting ready to be in a program this summer, [mhm] and my ex-husband has a habit of being late, [mhm] not even showing up, and he has the children during the summer for six weeks, so because of his habit of being late and not on time, he is going to make my son late to his program that he is in for the summer. [mhm] So, I’m going to jump in and say well okay, I’ll keep the kids in the summer. I’m going to do this because you are going to end up making Troy late, and it’s like no. I can’t do that. But see I did that in my marriage. I knew how he was, [mhm] so I was okay, I know this problem ahead of time. I can take care of it, and that was wrong. [mhm] I should not have taken care of it because it’s alright to mess up. It’s okay if it doesn’t work out [mhm] because the next time it will, the next time it won’t, but that’s life. I can’t control that, and I thought
I could.

TH 128 Yeah. So somewhere along the line you’ve got to push that button and go off duty?


TH 129 Yeah.

CL 120 Yeah. It’s easier as . . .

TH 130 It’s a choice that you have.

CL 130 Yeah. Yeah. I’m glad I can recognize it now. Oh, a couple years ago I didn’t recognize it. I didn’t know that that was what was really going on.

TH 131 And can you push that button the next time you see your ex-husband and he comes in thirty minutes late?

CL 131 I’m going to try. I’m going to try.

TH 132 Okay, well I know what not doing it would be, that would be to get all upset. And I know what, you know, doing it would be, I don’t know what trying means. What are you going to do?

CL 132 What am I going to do. Um . . .

TH 133 Not try. Try is kind of . . .

CL 133 Accept his faults. Accept him for who he is.

TH 134 So how are you going to do that? What button are you going to push when he comes sauntering in twenty minutes late?

CL 134 The I’m not going to fix this button. [mhm] It’s okay.

TH 135 And what will you tell yourself?

CL 135 The first thing I’ll probably tell myself, see you knew, anyway. But actually no. What I’ll tell myself is this is the road to recovery. [mhm] That this is what you are going to have to do because eventually I’d like to see the friction die down between us just because I’m not a friction person.

TH 136 Okay.
CL 136 You know, so that . . .

TH 137 What can you tell yourself when he walks in and you push that button and you sit back and you go . . .

CL 137 He’s doing the best he can just like I am.

TH 138 Hm. And we do things differently.

CL 138 And we do things differently, yeah.

TH 130 Sounds like you’ve got that response within you. You know you are so successful at all these other things that you do, but I wonder if you can be successful in a different way.

CL 139 In terms of him?

TH 140 Yeah. I mean can you be as successful at not doing things as you are at doing things.

CL 140 I hope so. I would like to try and see. [yeah] I think I can.

TH 141 Okay.

CL 141 I think I can.

TH 142 Okay. We’ve got just a minute or two left here, and could we just take a second and maybe get some feedback from you about what you might have learned in our time together today. Maybe relearned.

CL 142 Mhm. Um, the issue with my ex-husband, being able to deal with it a little bit differently than I have been dealing with it. [mhm] Um, the part of who I am now started out as a little girl, to look more into that, into that part of my life to see that there are a lot of similarities now. I never really put those two together until we did that today. Um, . . .

TH 143 To realize that you have some choices with your ex-husband.

CL 143 Yes.

TH 144 You realize that a lot of the things that you are today you learned in the past.
CL 144 Mhm. Yeah, definitely, [ok] and I never looked at it that way before.

TH 145 Ok. I kind of, was there anything else that you were thinking about?

CL 145 Not that I, there’s something, but I don’t know what it is, and we’re out of time, but I’ll think of it on my way . . .

TH 146 Because it kind of looked like you were going to say something.

CL 146 Yeah, there was something else that you had said that I was like ah, that was good. I have to remember that, and it was earlier in the session, but I think about these when I’m done, and it will come back to me, because it, from all of these that I’ve been going to, it’s really been beneficial.

TH 147 That’s great.

CL 147 Yeah, I enjoy them. I do.

TH 148 Well good. Thank you for coming in.

CL 148 Thank you.

TH 149 I enjoyed talking with you.

CL 149 Thank you. Thank you.

---

**Treatment Plan for Gina**

In further work with Gina, Carlson would continue to focus on her assets rather than on problems or pathology (after all, she was a 9.5!). He notes that he worked hard in the initial session to help her to feel competent, capable, and able to influence her own lifestyle. This was done by letting her tell her own story and doing the work which was easy for someone who overfunctions. It would have been easy to have focused on her liabilities and personality limitations. It seemed apparent that she would meet the criteria for both histrionic and narcissistic personality disorder. A strength-oriented approach works very well with someone with high GAF (Global Assessment of Functioning) allowing her to build on her already positive lifestyle. The goal is to continue to empower her using
encouragement and reframing of her thoughts and perceptions. Specific problems to be resolved include improving her relationship with her ex-husband and to learn to not overfunction and to flow with life. She needs to gain insight into where her beliefs come from and how they can be updated. Her belief that she cannot count on others, for example, needs to be changed to there are many people I can count on would be a good place to begin. I was also impressed with the family value of selfishness and tried to confront her on her own selfishness by showing its source. The idea of being selfish to a fault was novel to her. I would work at helping her be empathic and accept others. By being accepting and creating an environment of acceptance, she was able to look at her beliefs about not being appreciated. A dissonance was created as she believed no one appreciated her yet this person was listening and showing her respect and interest. The summary seemed to indicate that this was a valuable initial interview. I would want to continue with more of the same.

To Learn More About Adlerian Therapy

BOOKS


**VIDEOS**


**WEBSITES**

http://www.behavior.net/mhn/bolforum/message/8