

Attribution and Plagiarism

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Abstract

Adlerians often grumble about the lack of recognition for Adler's ideas, and how they are stolen by others. Some Adlerians make the same mistake when they present the ideas of Adler, Dreikurs, and other Adlerians without attribution, leaving the impression they are their own. Some Adlerian concepts are so familiar that we might forget that they have a specific origin and that this should be cited.

Accurate citation is critical for two reasons: (1) it gives credit to the originator of an idea or knowledge; (2) it allows the interested reader to locate the original source in order to either learn more about the topic, or to check the accuracy of its present usage.

American Psychological Association Ethics Code Standard 8.11

"Psychologists do not present portions of another's work or data as their own, even if the other work or data source is cited occasionally" (APA 2002)

This means that even though one might indicate that some of their material comes from a particular source, they are still obligated to cite that source when it is used. For example, it is appropriate to say, "Much of my work has been influenced by Dr. Rudolph Dreikurs, and his landmark book *Children the Challenge*." But it is essential later in the material when ideas from the book are used, that it still be specifically cited.

According to the Publication manual of the American Psychological Association, "The key element of this principle is that authors do not present the work of another as if it were their own" (APA 2010)

The manual goes on to say "This can extend to ideas as well as written words." You might get a great idea at a conference workshop and want to incorporate it into your own work. That is fine, as long as you give credit to the workshop presenter.

Two Problematic Examples

The Four Goals of Misbehavior (Dreikurs, 1947) and the Crucial C's (Bettner & Lew, 1989)

To examine the problem, I Googled both of these.

For the **Crucial C's**, I looked at nine sites. Two referenced Bettner and Lew. The others had no reference.

Of the eight sites I looked at for **The Four Goals of Misbehavior**, all but one said these were developed by Rudolf Dreikurs. However, only two had a reference to Dreikurs. Most cited secondary sources. The one had no reference.

Then there was one other site I looked at because it had both the **Crucial C's** and the **Four Goals**. The **Four Goals**, the site author said, were developed by Alfred Adler, and the **Crucial C's** she said were outlined by Alyson Schafer. (<http://www.mamacompass.com>)

What about Public Domain?

- Public domain means you do not have to pay a licensing fee to utilize the material.
- It can be tricky to find out what is and what is not in the public domain due to the expiration of copyright. You should never just assume.
- The works of Shakespeare are in the public domain. But you would not publish one of his plays and claim to be the author.
- "It is widely regarded as a sign of decency and respect to acknowledge the creator by giving him/her credit for the work." [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attribution_\(copyright\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attribution_(copyright))

Where to Find References

1. **Ask someone.** Some of the authors are still available and only too happy to share the best reference. There are others in the Adlerian community who would be happy to be asked. You can even begin with the NASAP office.
2. **Jane Griffith and Bob Powers produced *The Lexicon of Adlerian Psychology*** (Griffith & Powers, 2007). This is a well referenced booklet on 106 common Adlerian terms.
3. **Do a google search.** True, this can be misleading, but on the other hand it can also provide some clues for where to start looking.
4. **Try a library electronic resources search.** I had no problem with the Four Goals of Misbehavior.

References

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