

CHAPTER II

THE PRECONDITIONS FOR PERSONAL ACTUALIZATION

1. INTRODUCTION

2.

Psychopedagogics is that part discipline of pedagogics that is interested in the **ways a child becomes adult in an educative situation**. The question of concern is "**how**" does his/her changing, becoming adult or personal actualization occur. Thus, the **object or area of study for psychopedagogics is a child's becoming adult or personal actualization in an educative situation**.

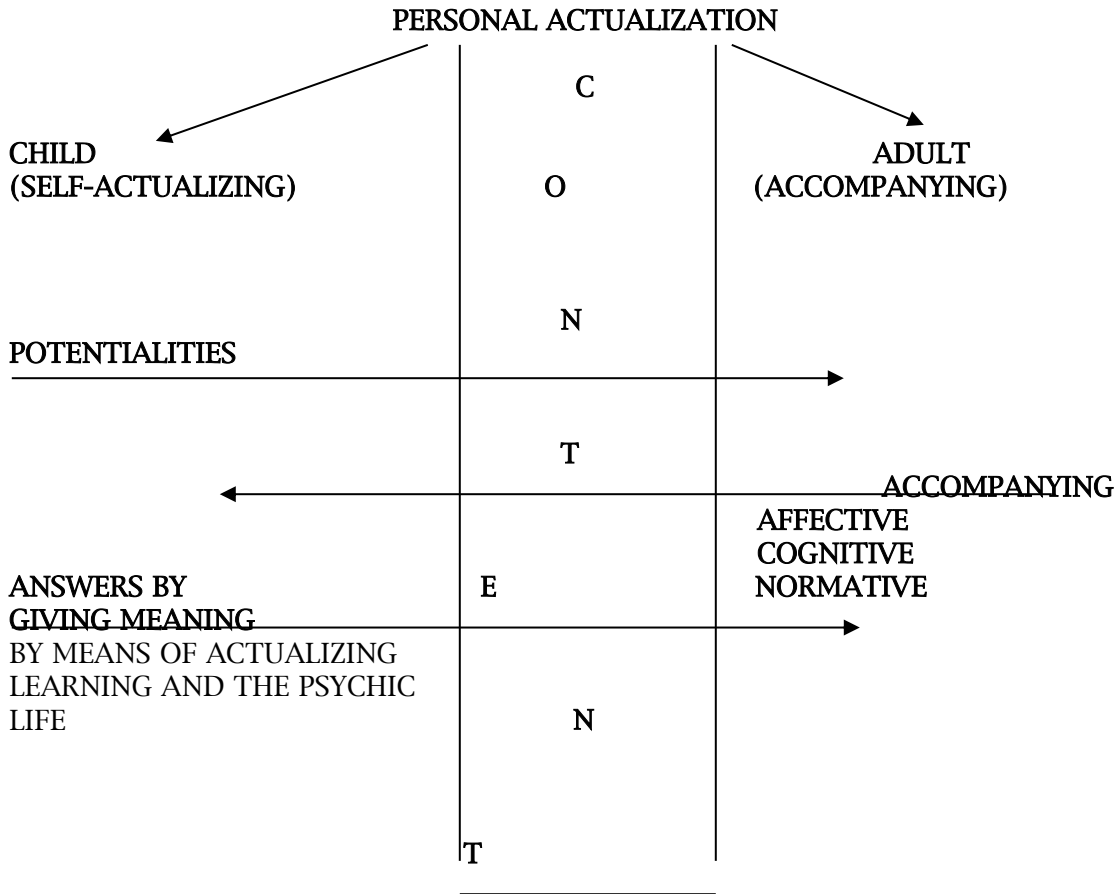
As noted in the previous chapter, the constituents of an educative situation, i.e., **adult, child and educational content**, play a role in a child's personal actualization. His/her personal actualization and the adult's educating or **accompanying** are closely related. Indeed, personal actualization can occur because he/she has the **potentiality** to be educated and thus to become adult. From philosophical anthropology it is clear that he/she is **potentiality** and this is the foundation of his/her total personal actualization. A child enters the world with given potentialities, but these potentialities must be **actualized** gradually. Potentialities refer to the totality of a child's personal potentialities by which he/she is able to become a full-fledged adult **person**. Thus, he/she has physical, intellectual, linguistic, psychic, social, spiritual, sensory, relationship potentialities, etc. However, they must be actualized through educating or by the adult **accompanying** as well as by a child's own **self-actualizing** his/her potentialities by participating in his/her being educated.

Hence, there is a close relationship between an adult **accompanying** and a child self-actualizing. Consequently, the **nature** of this/her accompaniment directly influences the **way** he/she will become adult. For example, at birth a child has the potentialities to be able to walk, talk or do arithmetic. However, it is largely the nature of the accompaniment that is going to determine "**how**" he/she is going to **learn** to actualize these potentialities and "**how**" his/her **becoming** adult is going to appear.

Hence, a child's personal actualization rests on two legs (Sonnekus, 1973, p 30), namely:

- * **accompaniment** by an adult
- * **self-actualization** by a child.

Schematically this is represented as follows:



In light of the psychopedagogic question, is an inquiry into "how" an adult accompanies and "how" on that basis a child's personal actualization occurs.

2. ACCOMPANYING (GUIDING) TO PERSONAL ACTUALIZATION

Although accompaniment and personal actualization are not separate from each other, it is necessary for greater clarity first to attend to the nature and ways of accompanying. Since educative

accompanying always has as its aim a child's adequate personal actualization to proper adulthood, it should be viewed as the adult's **purposeful and planned intervention** with a child to reach this goal (Crous, 1981, p 43). For this reason, accompaniment must be linked up with how a child's personal actualization takes place (see further on) and, therefore, three **ways of accompaniment** are distinguished, i.e., **affective** (emotional), **cognitive** (knowing) and **normative (meaning giving)** accompaniment (Sonnekus and Ferreira, 1987, pp 293-297). Also, these ways of accompanying are not actualized apart from each other but rather as a unity. Under different circumstances, one can be more prominent than another although all are continually relevant.

2.1 Affective or emotional accompaniment

The educative situation is carried largely by the **emotional relationship** between adult and child. Since accompanying is mainly an activity initiated by an adult, he/she is responsible for establishing a warm, intimate and trusting educative climate by means of his/her emotional accompaniment (Sonnekus and Ferreira, 1987, p 293). Such an educative atmosphere is characterized by mutual trust, reciprocal understanding and unconditional acceptance of each other. This involves the adult, who the child accepts, opening to, committing to and lovingly turning to him/her, gaining his/her trust, showing trust and interest in him/her, and allowing him/her to feel secure and safe (Vrey, 1979, p 63). Indeed, emotional accompaniment is the **framework** within which the educative event occurs and it is the **basis** for a child's adequate personal actualization.

Acceptance, mutual trust, establishing a relationship, lived experiencing security, handling feelings and independence are viewed as some of the forms of emotional accompaniment (Prinsloo, 1984, pp 50-55). Through this accompaniment, both adult and child lived experience trust and acceptance by which educating is **inspired** and a child becomes **ready** and **willing** for it. AN adult's consistent actions strengthen a child's emotional life to such a degree that he/she will explore his/her world with increasing self-confidence. The emotional atmosphere "**serves as an island of safety**" (Newman and Newman, 1975, p 52) to which he/she can return when the world becomes too threatening so that he/she can be encouraged there to once again go exploring. A child must **trust** that an adult will help him/her in his/her shortcomings and not

abandon him/her because it is precisely in these shortcomings that his/her own dignity can be undermined or destroyed (Prinsloo, 1984, p 52).

If there is a close mutual relationship between the parents as well as between parents and child, this enables him/her to enter into favorable relationships with friends and other adults. In such a close relationship, a parent also shows **sensitivity** for his/her feelings and offers him/her the opportunity to express these feelings and helps him/her deal with and assimilate them.

Emotional accompaniment embraces activities such as encouraging, consoling, acknowledging, praising, being approachable, being sensitive, being friendly, being sympathetic, caring, coddling, empathizing, making physical contact and following routines. These sorts of actions by an adult can lead a child to **lived experience** security, certainty, relaxation, and self-confidence, i.e., emotional **stability** that is the basis for adequate personal actualization.

On the other hand, emotional accompaniment also is actualized when an adult appears to a child to be unfriendly, insulting, abusive, humiliating, destructive and aggressive. Superiority, inconsistency, an authoritarian attitude, over protection, sarcasm, etc. can lead him/her to lived experience insecurity, anxiety, tension, unwillingness, etc., i.e., emotional **lability** that can seriously interfere with his/her personal actualization.

Thus, the **ways** a child's personal actualization takes place cannot be separated from the **ways** he/she is accompanied by an adult. Within this framework, emotional accompaniment is the basis for personal actualization in the sense that it promotes or impedes it.

2.2 Cognitive or knowing accompaniment

Adequate cognitive or knowing accompaniment is only possible if it rests on a child's stable emotional lived experiencing. Although emotional accompaniment is the **basis** or framework for adequate educating, cognitive or knowing accompaniment should not be viewed as higher or more important. It is **another type** that, in addition to the emotional, has particular importance for a child's becoming adult.

First, cognitive accompaniment is characterized by a purposeful striving by both adult and child to learn to know each other better (Prinsloo, 1984, p 55). An adult needs to know a child and his/her destination and a child has to progressively learn to know what educating confronts him/her with (Landman, 1974, p 24). Second, it is directed to actualizing a child's **learning potential** (Sonnekus and Ferreira, 1987, p 295) and this is only possible if an adult knows **what** he/she can expect of him/her, **what** he/she is going to do and **how** he/she is going to do it.

According to Prinsloo (1984, p 55) there can be mutual understanding only if the opportunity is created to interact with each other. An adult needs to **understand** a child and educate him/her in this light. Knowledge of being a child implies **knowledge** of him/her at each level of becoming and in each period of life. Also, a child needs to **understand** what an adult's **purpose** is in accompanying him/her. The degree to which he/she **learns to know** the adult will depend on the degree to which the adult makes him/herself knowable.

Since this way of accompanying primarily is directed to a child's learning potentialities, it is mostly actualized in terms of the **learning** contents an adult wants him/her to master. Although cognitive accompaniment is most clearly recognizable in a school situation, it does not occur exclusively there. In the primary educative situation (home), it plays an equally important role and it embraces activities such as explaining, clarifying, ordering, systematizing, asking and answering questions, transferring knowledge, solving problems, insight and understanding. Thus, a parent who teaches his/her child table manners is just as much involved in cognitive accompaniment as is a teacher in a mathematics class. Especially by means of this accompaniment, a child is led to learn to know him/herself and his/her world better so he/she can gradually find his/her way without an adult's help. Effective or adequate cognitive accompaniment results in a knowing **lived experiencing** by a child that is **ordered**. In contrast, unordered and poorly structured cognitive accompaniment leads to a lived experiencing of **disorder** and consequently also (emotional) **lability** that can seriously restrain learning. The reason for this is that unordered accompaniment does not lead to understanding, insight or comprehension and consequently this robs a child of his/her self-confidence and leaves him/her feeling uncertain and insecure about the particular contents.

Although a child actualizes learning him/herself, still, it is directly influenced by the way he/she is accompanied by an adult. Therefore, an adult should continually take into account the cognitive level (concrete, abstract, etc.) on which a child actualizes his/her learning and with which his/her accompaniment has to be linked up.

2.3 Normative (meaning-giving) accompaniment

Since the aim of educative accompaniment is a child's eventual proper adulthood, this implies that he/she should be accompanied so that he/she gradually lives in accordance with the **norms** of adulthood. Thus, educative accompaniment also is a normative matter. Through his/her accompanying, an adult has to convey the norms of a particular society to a child. However, he/she should not merely **hold** such norms and values **before** a child but he/she should **exemplify** them and in such a way that a child can and will **identify** with them and in doing so accept and appropriate them as norms for him/herself. Subsequently, he/she should strive to be like an adult.

Through authority and discipline an adult guides him/her to be **obedient** to the demands of propriety posed by the norms. This requires that an adult set specific limits in terms of the norms (see Prinsloo, 1984, p 59). These limits should clearly indicate to him/her what he/she might and might not do. However, these limits should be prescribed in ways that it is possible for him/her to obey them, and they also should be in his/her self interest and not for the sake of an adult's own convenience. A child should not be left to his/her own devices and it gives him/her security if he/she knows where the limits are (see Prinsloo, 1984, p 59).

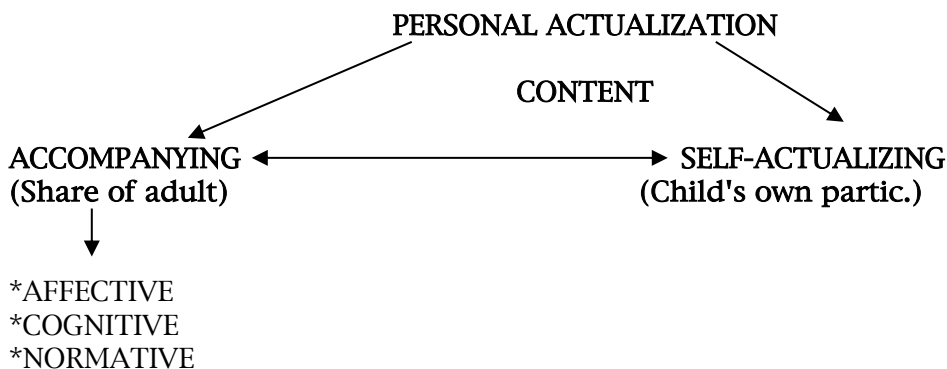
Although normative accompaniment goes hand in hand with **maintaining authority**, this does not mean that norms should be forced upon a child. Even though an adult initiates educating, a child needs to take the initiative to appropriate or **identify** with it. Ultimately, it is a child who must **give meaning** to the norms before he/she will act in accordance with them. Identifying and giving meaning begin by a child initially identifying him/herself with the big size and with the person of the adult and gradually with the

norms in terms of which the adult also lives (see Sonnekus, 1976, pp 9-10).

In addition to identifying with the exemplified norms, normative meaning giving accompaniment also has another side closely related to the above. A child should be accompanied so that the **sense and meaning** of the **educative contents** are unlocked for and by him/her. Certainly, he/she needs to identify him/herself with the norms, but the presence of an adult who can bring home to him/her the sense and meaning as well as the underlying values of things is indispensable. This guided giving meaning largely occurs through the ways a child is emotionally and knowingly accompanied. The way a child lived experiences his/her emotional (stable or labile) and knowing (ordered, unordered) accompaniment largely determines the nature of his/her normative lived experiencing (meaningful or meaningless) (See "**lived experiencing**" further on). A child attributes a high value to contents that he/she lived experiences as valuable, useful and meaningful and they gradually become norms for him/her that are expressed in his/her increasingly normed behaviors.

These three ways of accompaniment cannot be actualized apart from each other and in their mutual coherence they have particular significance for the way a child's personal actualization takes place.

The above is schematically represented as follows:



3. SELF-ACTUALIZATION

As repeatedly mentioned, personal actualization rests on two legs, i.e., **accompaniment** (guidance) by an adult and **self-actualization** by a child. Self-actualization refers to a child's own participation or

involvement in his/her personal actualization where he/she purposefully tries to optimally implement hi/her personal potentialities (see also Nel, 1963, p 46). Educative accompaniment is an adult's role in the educative event. In this discussion it must be kept in mind that **self-actualization** (i.e., a child's own participation) always occurs within the framework of **adult accompaniment** or educating in terms of **educative contents** (the three constituents of an educative situation).

The following deals with the **preconditions** for, the **nature and ways** of and the **results** or **manifestations** of self-actualization.

3.1 Preconditions for self-actualization

Accompanying and self-actualizing are activities can occur only because child and adult are potentiality. A child enters the world with given potentialities (see philosophical anthropology) and gradually they must be actualized. Thus, a child's **potentialities** and an adult's **accompaniment** are the **preconditions** for self-actualization as well as for becoming adult. This raises the question of the nature and meaning of these potentialities.

3.1.1 The I as spiritual core of a person

A child has a variety of potentialities that contribute to his/her becoming a proper adult. The first and probably most important of these is **life**. Consequently, a first precondition for personal actualization is the spirit as life. As the deepest essential of a person, this **spirit** is viewed as the **I** or **personal core** which is at the **center** of being human (see Nel, 1963, p 53).

Since this spirit is the seat of the I as well as the personal core which constitutes the deepest essence of being human, it is what makes a person a human being. When phenomenological anthropology (see chapter I, section 3.1) is searched for the first essentials of the I, the following are seen as its essentials:

- Openness
- Potentiality
- Intentionality
- Dialogue
- Totality
- Existence

Consciousness and self-consciousness
Historicity, etc.

Also, the following are essentials of relevance for forming a better concept of the I.

The I is:

polyvalent potential
the drive and driving power of a person
an active power
a free, creative power
a driving, animated power (see Nel, et al., 1965, p 135;
Kritzinger and Labuschagne, 1980, p 247;
Nel, 1968, p 35).

According to Max Scheler (Nel, no date, p 106), the I is not a perceptible substance but manifests itself in a person's **actions**. In the deed, in the activity, the I is the core, the most essential of a person's own involvement (Nel, no date, p 107). Although the I manifests itself and makes itself knowable in human activities, it is not the activity, but first it is the **power** that makes the activity possible and second the I, as the most essential core of a person, always is involved in and becomes embodied in the activity. The I or spiritual personal core is a source of energy which is the organizational center of all activities and, according to Vrey (1979, p 13), it is directed to the meaning of life. From the beginning, a person's I is present as power. However, power has little meaning in itself. It only has meaning if it is used to participate in something. Therefore, **the I is viewed as a given potential, a plurality of powers that make activity or action possible, and it accompanies and continually is at a person's center.**

Thus, the I is at the foundation of personal actualization and continually forms its pivotal point.

3.1.2 Child potentialities

A child's personal actualization does not occur automatically. It requires that his/her given potentialities be actualized. This does not occur merely on the basis of an interaction between heredity and environment (Stern). Also, he/she is not surrendered to what he/she has inherited. Within a hereditary framework he/she has

the task of actualizing his/her potentialities him/herself. Thus, his/her personal **potentialities** have to be converted into personal **actualities** (Van Niekerk, 1976, p 34). **All of his personal potentialities constitute his/her psychic life** and this includes **all** of his/her potentialities for learning and becoming adult (Van Niekerk, 1976, p 83).

Before actualization is discussed, attention is given to some of the potentialities that are the basis of personal actualization.

3.1.2.1 Intelligence as a cognitive potentiality

In the above discussion, the I or personal core, **as power** has little meaning in itself. It only acquires meaning if it is used to participate in something. Also, the I acquires meaning because it is the potentiality that gives a child the power or intentionality to actualize these potentialities.

Among others, a child has physical, cognitive, linguistic and social potentialities. Of these, the cognitive potentiality of intelligence is of special significance and a teacher should have a thorough understanding of it. It plays a particular role in personal actualization in that it determines its quality.

In and through his/her intelligence, a child goes out to the world and becomes acquainted with it (see Sonnekus, 1968, p 78). Through his/her intelligence, he/she enters a relationship with reality (Prinsloo, 1982, p 83), masters it and maintains him/herself within it. Intelligence is an approach, and it also determines the level on which the I enters reality. Therefore, Sonnekus says: **"Within the totality of a person, intelligence is a power for breaking through the world surrounding one who in his world involvement continually confronts new situations."** In this way he/she continually breaks through new situations, broadens the horizon of his/her landscape and creates a new world for him/herself (Nel et al., 1965, p 311). Thus, intelligence, as is the I, is a power within a person's totality. However, the main difference is that the I is a polyvalent power while intelligence is a cognitive power.

Above and beyond the fact that intelligence is a potentiality in itself, it also is the foundation for actualizing other potentialities. It is a

given potentiality and, as such, it needs to be actualized and is merely potentiality until it is. Also, intelligence is implemented by means of the modes of [psychic life] actualization (see further on), but their level is determined by intelligence. Consequently, intelligence is the cognitive **stratum** on which the psychic life is actualized and learning occurs (Prinsloo, 1982, p 49).

3.1.2.2 Language, play, body

Along with intelligence, language, play and body are a few other potentialities by which personal actualization takes place. There is no doubt that there are many more. Without going into these potentialities, the following briefly indicates their significance for personal actualization and especially for the interdependence of the various potentialities.

Language is a person's medium for communicating, expressing and projecting, thinking, attributing meaning, etc. It is especially by means of language that the educative relationship between parent and child is put in motion and it contributes greatly to personal actualization.

Play is a way a child deals with things in his/her world. It is a way in which he/she learns to know and master him/herself and his/her world. In playing, he/she strengthens his/her grip on reality and this contributes greatly to his/her personal actualization.

A person enters the world as a biological being (Langeveld) and it is in and through his/her **body** that he/she becomes involved in his/her world. It is the center of his/her existence and through it he/she becomes acquainted with what surrounds him/her, and in terms of it, his/her personal actualization is able to thrive.

These human phenomena essentially are given as potentialities and therefore must gradually be actualized and thus contribute to personal actualization. However, there is an interdependence among them with which a person is born. Actualizing does not occur in isolation but actualizing one potentiality is always a precondition for actualizing others. Thus, language and play cannot be actualized apart from the body. Bodily potentialities need play and movement to be actualized and the relationships among language, thought and intelligence are inseparable.

From this very brief discussion, it is clear that a child's becoming adult or his/her personal actualization is a **matter of a totality** within which his/her personal potentialities are continually actualized and are inseparably connected with each other.

4. SUMMARY

Psychopedagogics is especially interested in the ways a child becomes an adult. Therefore, personal actualization is its area of study. However, personal actualization is not a matter that occurs automatically and, thus, in the above discussion the preconditions for it also are indicated. An adult's accompaniment, the nature of the contents and a child's potentialities are identified as preconditions for personal actualization. In the following chapter, attention is given to how personal actualizing occurs by actualizing the psychic life and learning.

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