

CHAPTER II THE PRECONDITIONS FOR PERSONAL ACTUALIZATION

1. INTRODUCTION

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

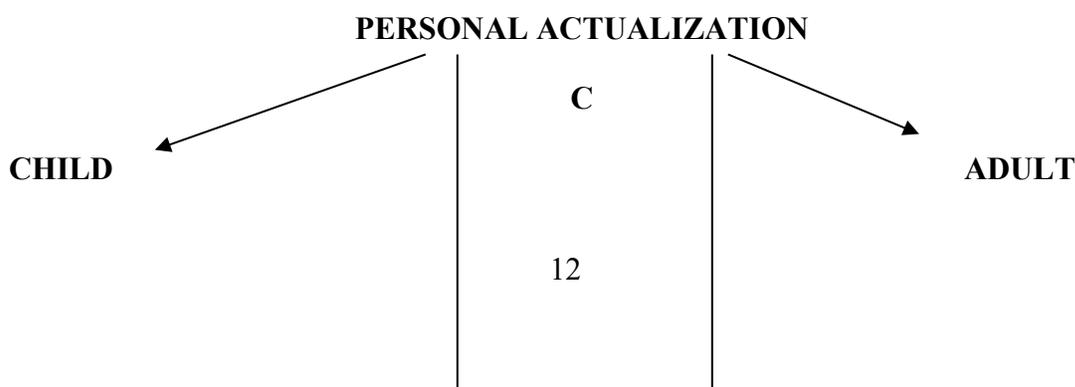
As noted in the previous chapter, the constituents of an educative situation, i.e., **adult**, **child**, and **educative content**, play a role in a child's personal actualization. His/her personal actualization, and the adult's educating or **accompanying** are closely related. Indeed, personal actualization can occur because he/she has the **potentiality** to be educated and, thus, to become adult. From philosophical anthropology, he/she is **potentiality**, and this is the foundation of his/her total personal actualization. A child enters the world with given potentialities, but they must be **actualized** gradually. Potentialities refer to the totality of a child's personal potentialities by which he/she can 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, i.e., by an adult **accompanying**, as well as by a child's own **self-actualizing** his/her potentialities by participating in his/her being educated.

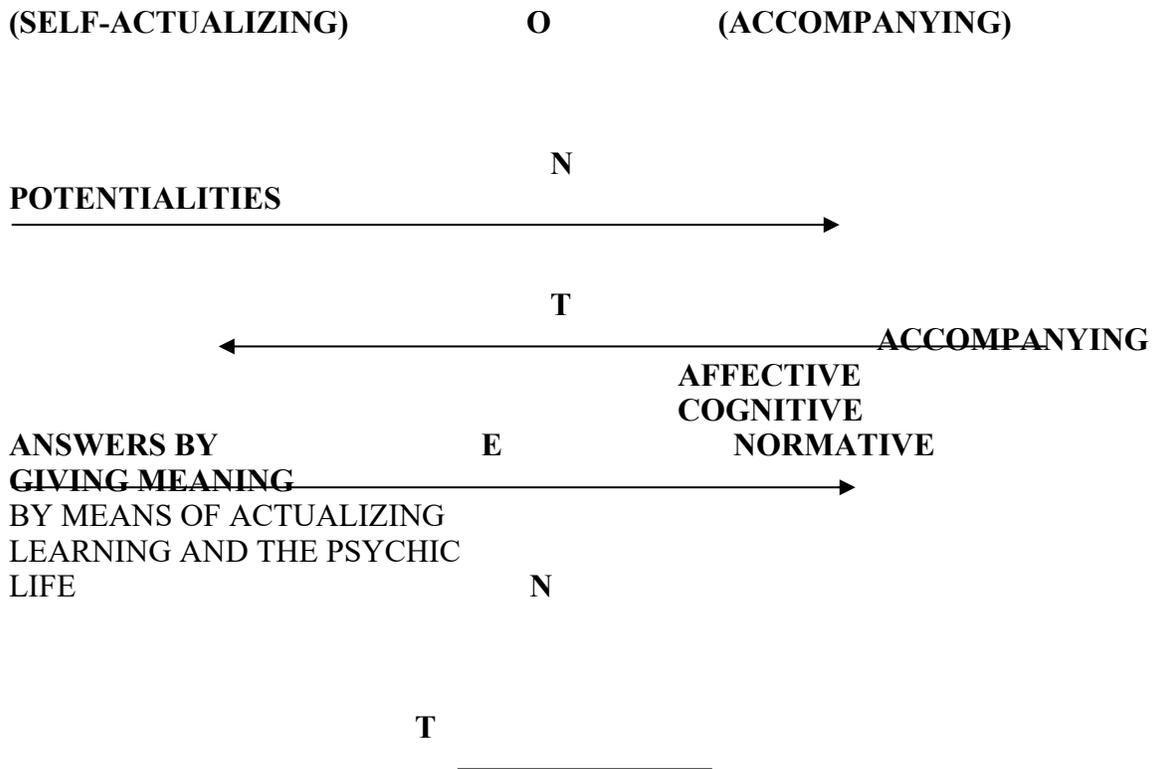
Hence, there is a close relationship between an adult **accompanying** and a child self-actualizing. Thus, the **nature** of this accompaniment directly influences the **way** he/she will become adult. For example, at birth a child has the potentialities to eventually be able to walk, talk, or do arithmetic. However, it is largely the nature of the accompaniment which 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.

From the above, a child's personal actualization rests on two legs (Sonnekus, 1973, p 30), i.e.,

- * **accompaniment** by the adult
- * **self-actualization** by the child

Schematically, this is represented as follows:





From the psychopedagogical question, below is an inquiry into "how" an adult accompanies and "how" a child self-actualizes his/her potentialities such that personal actualization occurs.

2. ACCOMPANYING (GUIDING) TO PERSONAL ACTUALIZATION

Although accompaniment and personal actualization are not separate from each other, for greater clarity, first attention is given 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 is viewed as the adult's **purposeful** and **planned intervention** with a child so he/she can reach this aim (Crous, 1981, p 43). For this reason, accompaniment is linked up with how a child's personal actualization occurs (see further on) and 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 separately but 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 the 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 takes place, and it is the [emotional] **ground** for a child's adequate personal actualization.

Acceptance, mutual trust, establishing a relationship, experiencing security, handling feelings, and independence are some of the forms of emotional accompaniment (Prinsloo, 1984, pp 50-55). Through this accompaniment, both adult and child experience trust and acceptance, by which educating is **inspired** and a child becomes **ready** and **willing** for it. The 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 the adult will help him/her in his/her shortcomings and not abandon him/her because it is precisely in these shortcomings that he/she experiences 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 favorable relationships with friends and other adults. In such a close relationship, the parent also shows **sensitivity** for his/her feelings and offers him/her an opportunity to express them 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 the adult can lead a child to **lived experience** security, certainty, relaxation, and self-confidence, i.e., emotional **stability**, which is the ground for adequate personal actualization.

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

From the above, the **ways** a child's personal actualization occurs cannot be separated from the **ways** he/she is accompanied by the adult. Within this framework, emotional accompaniment is the ground 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 **ground** or framework for adequate educating, cognitive or knowing accompaniment should not be viewed as higher or more important. It is **another kind** which, 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 must know a child and his/her destination, and a child must 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 the adult knows **what** he/she can expect of the child, **what** he/she [the adult] 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. The adult must **understand** a child and educate him/her accordingly. Knowledge of being a child implies **knowledge** of him/her at each level of becoming and in each period of life. Also, a child must **understand** what the 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 is primarily directed to a child's learning potentialities, it is mostly actualized in terms of the **learning** content the adult wants him/her to master. Although cognitive accompaniment is most clearly recognizable in the school situation, it does not occur exclusively there. In the primary [or primordial] 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 the adult's help. Effective or adequate cognitive accompaniment results in a knowing **lived experiencing** by a child which is **ordered**. In contrast, unordered and poorly structured cognitive accompaniment leads to a lived experiencing of **disorder** and, thus, emotional **lability**, which can seriously restrain learning. The reason for this is that unordered accompaniment does not lead to understanding, insight, or comprehension and this robs a child of his/her self-confidence and leaves him/her feeling uncertain and insecure about the content.

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

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. In this light, educative accompaniment is a normative matter. Through his/her accompanying, an adult must 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 especially 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 the 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 in which it is possible for him/her to obey them and they should be in his/her self-interest and not for the sake of the 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).

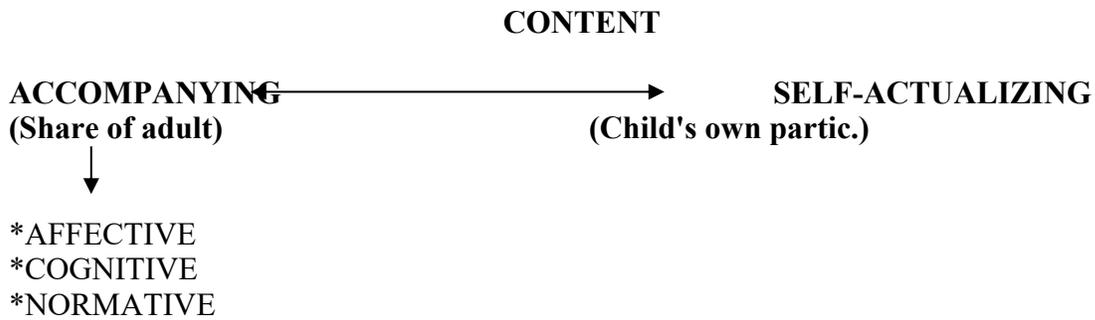
Although normative accompaniment goes hand in hand with **maintaining authority**, this does not mean that norms should be forced upon a child. Even though the adult initiates educating, a child must take the initiative to appropriate or **identify** with it. Eventually, it is a child who must **give 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 has another side which is closely related to the above. A child should be accompanied so that the **sense and meaning** of the **educative content** are unlocked for and by him/her. He/she must 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 influences the nature of his/her normative lived experiencing (meaningful or meaningless) (See "**lived experiencing**" further on). A child attributes a high value to content which he/she lived experiences as valuable, useful, and meaningful, and it gradually becomes a norm for him/her which is expressed in his/her increasingly normed behaviors.

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

The above is schematically represented as follows:





3. SELF-ACTUALIZATION

As is repeatedly mentioned, personal actualization rests on two legs, i.e., **accompaniment** (guidance) by the adult and **self-actualization** by the 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 his/her personal potentialities (see also Nel, 1963, p 46). Educative accompaniment is the adult's role in the educative event. In this discussion it is not mentioned again, but it must be kept in mind that **self-actualization** always occurs within the framework of **adult accompaniment** or educating in terms of **educative content** (the three constituents of an educative situation).

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

3.1 Preconditions for self-actualization

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

3.1.1 The I as the spiritual core of a person

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

Since 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 is manifested 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 is manifested and makes itself knowable in human activities, it is not the activity but, first, it is the **power** which makes the activity possible and, second, the I, as the most essential core of a person, is always 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 itself has little meaning. 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 which make activity or action possible and it accompanies and continually is at a person's center.**

Hence, 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 because 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** must be converted to personal **actualities** (Van Niekerk, 1976, p 34). **His/her personal potentialities constitute his/her psychic life**, and this includes his/her potentialities for learning and becoming adult (Van Niekerk, 1976, p 83).

Before discussing actualization, attention is given to some of the potentialities which 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 itself. It only acquires meaning if it is used to participate in something. Also, the I acquires meaning because it is the potentiality which gives a child the power to actualize these potentialities.

A child has physical, cognitive, linguistic, and social potentialities. Of these, the cognitive potentiality of intelligence is of particular 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 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 itself, it also is the foundation for actualizing other potentialities. It is a given potentiality, and it must be actualized, and is merely potentiality until it is. Also, intelligence is implemented by means of the modes of actualization (see further on), but their level is determined by intelligence. Thus, 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 occurs. The following briefly indicates their significance for personal actualization, and especially for the interdependence among them.

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.

Playing 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 which his/her personal actualization can thrive.

Each of these human phenomena are given as essential potentialities which must be gradually actualized and contribute to personal actualization. However, there is an interdependence among them with which a person is born. Actualizing does not occur in isolation, and actualizing one 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, 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.

4. SUMMARY

Psychopedagogics is especially interested in the ways a child becomes an adult. Therefore, personal actualization [within an educative relationship] is its area of study. However, personal actualization is not a matter which occurs automatically and, thus, in the above discussion, the preconditions for it also are indicated. The adult's accompaniment, the nature of the content, 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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