



## Innovation is a choice

### The Psychological Wednesday Society

- Vienna, 1902

Between 1902 and 1907, every Wednesday after dinner Sigmund Freud would receive a group of friends in his Bergasse Street home in Vienna. Most of the friends were Jewish, many were medical doctors but there were also philosophers, writers, educators... all of them with inquisitive, scholarly spirits. The group was known as the **Psychological Wednesday Society**, which later became the **Vienna Psychoanalytical Society**, the world's first psychoanalytical institution.

The meetings followed an established ritual. First, coffee, pastries and cigars. After a brief chitchat on frivolous matters, a discussion on psychology would ensue, whether related to clinical cases or personal situations. All the names of those present would be placed in an urn and one would then be drawn. This person would be the moderator of the meeting, although everyone was expected to participate in the discussion. Finally, Freud invariably concluded the session.

In the **Minutes of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society** (1907-1923), Dr. Nunberg wrote: "We wanted to let the reader see for himself how the participants influenced each other, how they accepted or rejected what was offered to them, and to what extent they were sometimes dominated by influences, emotions and prejudices foreign to the spirit of psychoanalysis. We wanted to give the reader testimony to the struggles that took place within the Vienna Society and that allowed its members to overcome their resistance and become competent psychoanalysts [...]. I therefore dedicate this study to the old circle of friends in which psychoanalysis originated, in memory of the stimulating hours dedicated together to intellectual inquiry."

What drove these men to go out into the cold Viennese night to meet together Wednesday after Wednesday? We dare say it was due to their shared dissatisfaction regarding the science of the time, to their tenacity in forging new roads, because, and of this we are certain, **innovation is a choice**.