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## **Child Development Monograph 1**

### **Mental Development of a Human Being as Viewed by "Counter-Conditioning Therapy®" A Unified, NON-COGNITIVE Psychotherapy**

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#### **INTRODUCTION**

People don't evolve out of an experiential vacuum. Instead, they live and flourish amongst human beings. Through the authors' emphasis upon the universal quality and nature of early experiences, you the reader, will appreciate the extent to which, in common human terms, all of us possess the same mental response capacity. At the same time, you will be able to mentally resurrect some of your own childhood experiences, and thus, gain some personal sense of what the authors are talking about. This material will allow you to place your childhood experiences into a perspective which comes from an experiential, rather than a theoretical, view of early mental development. In sum, all of us, inadvertently and innocently, participated in the formation of our own mental system simply by the act of growing older.

#### **YOU WERE A KID ONCE AND YOU WERE PARENTED**

You were a kid once and you were parented. Consequently, you, like all human beings, have met with a conditioning experience originating from and determined by the quality of that nurturing.

When you and I were born, the people who looked after us and to whom we paid attention, were those in charge of PARENTING us (these people weren't necessarily our biological parents). During our childhood, we were "little" and they were "taller" than us, so we always paid attention to them. As children, we "short" people spent much of our early time looking up at them and envying their height. This observation influenced us in our emotional desire to accelerate our "growing-up" period.

The "tall" people had access to benefits which we "little" people coveted. For instance, they could "stay up late" and they could "eat what they pleased". It appeared to us as children that the "tall" people weren't always being told "what to do".

## **DEVELOPMENT OF THE NORMAL WORKINGS OF THE MIND**

As kids, we constantly heard our parents use words such as: SHOULD, MUST, OUGHT. Our parents preoccupied themselves with STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR and VALUE JUDGEMENTS. They also spent much time and mental energy commenting upon OTHER PEOPLE'S BEHAVIOR. We heard our parents employ YOU frequently in their commentary. Also, we heard them use WHY quite a lot.

During this time of laying down the mental foundation of ourselves, we inadvertently forged a framework based upon COPYING verbalized material from those older than us. We heard their commentary over and over again. So the SHOULD and the SHOULDN'TS and the MUST and the MUSTN'TS which we mentally absorbed from our parents' verbal commentary formed the beginnings of our own mental fabric.

As we progress through life, we reiterate parts of this copied material as if it were our own THINKING. The COPIED material is now us. It is this absorbed emotional material which DICTATES, unremittingly, the style of our behavior as members of the next generation. This mental evolution depicts the normal development of our functioning mentality, the commonplace workings of the human mind.

## **PARENTAL REPETITION OF LOGIC AND REASON**

The child hears the verbal demands and commands repeatedly hurled at him. These demands and commands become lodged in his volitional mental system (his information-bank). The parent employs logic, reason and repetition in anticipation of obedient behavior. But the child has heard the same commentary over and over. The more this commentary is repeated by the parent, the more the child will be inclined to drift away from compliance. Indeed, the only function served by parental repetition is the mobilization of the child's "reactive" ([non-volitional](#)) system. Inevitably, parental "brow-beating" results in the child's rebellious or even disobedient behavior. It is the mobilization of the child's emotional system which impedes his cooperation. Telling the child a hundred times "clean up your room" is not an informationally productive activity.

## **A CHILD'S NATURE IS TO BE INQUISITIVE AND SPONTANEOUS**

A child is intrinsically creative, inquisitive and spontaneous. Kids are curious about everything. After all, they only arrived recently on this earth. As we were all kids once, all of us have filed those early developmental experiences in our mental "bank". This developmental scenario applies to the mental evolution of everyone.

## **GRIEVANCE NETWORK**

While we were growing up, a parent said to us, "No, you can't have that"; or, "No, you can't do that"; or, "No, you can't say that". In terms of impact upon the child, it matters not in what language "no" is said. The variable of what nation a person was raised or enculturated in is irrelevant. This matter of cultural background merely serves to pin-point the national location or the human source of the particular contents of one's emotional, reactive make-up.

This socialization activity represented by the phrases "no, you can't have that" or "no you can't do that" is the basis for the creation of what we call the "grievance network". Every child acquires a grievance network in the

process of their mental development. It doesn't matter in what human circumstance or environment the child was raised. It is from mentally "collecting" resentments or perceived grievances in the early stages of one's mental beginnings that the common human capacity for "complaining" arises. Raised in poverty or raised in plenty does not cancel out development of the grievance network.

Becoming a parent places one in the unenviable position of being "blamed" by your children over how you raised them. As a parent, one cannot escape the inevitability of this human event. This "blaming" activity evolves into a collection of negative happenings which form into a "network of grievances". The beginnings of the collecting activity that forms the "grievance network" starts shortly after the child begins to verbalize. He demands things because we all want our way. It is a parental responsibility to direct and control this childhood tendency. Intermittent confrontation between parent and child is the inevitable outcome of their interaction. In no way can the parent win. He will not end up as the "good-guy" in this struggle. Reasoning with the child merely delays the inevitable "blaming" outcome. Endeavoring to have the child UNDERSTAND parental actions only forestalls active resentment in the child's mind.

### **CONDITIONED TO SCAPEGOAT, RATHER THAN TO GET ALONG WITH PEOPLE**

As human beings, we are not conditioned or oriented to "like" people. We are conditioned to "scapegoat" people. Scapegoating, a state of mental functioning, occurs because we, as human beings, are conditioned to be alert to the differences in human behavior. Therefore, we become inadvertent participants in accentuating and amplifying human differences. It is due to human conditioning that we mentally perform in this way. This factor in our mental development does not prepare us to be innately predisposed towards others.

Another feature which we mentally possess in common, besides the one of actively noting different behaviors, is the activity of "complaining". While our individual complaints differ, the activity of complaining is universal. Complaining evolves from two items. One is "we all want our own way". The other is our inherent compulsion to refine and improve upon our surroundings for reasons of comfort and personal safety (a feature in the survival of the species).

### **TO BE ALIKE, IN ORDER TO BE LIKED**

As children, we feel driven to appear similar to the human elements in our surroundings, to fit in with people around us. We want to be "liked" by people. We want to "fit in". We don't like being left out of what everyone around us is experiencing. In fact at times, we even want the same things or experiences as have our familial brothers and sisters. If we don't get our way, we get mad. Consequently, this component in our pattern of behavior can conspire to make us feel "abandoned" by our family, which causes us to feel "sorry" for ourselves. As children, we become annoyed with those around us when they don't let us do what we want to do. The drive to both get our way and to fit-in with those around us is a "push-pull" feature of our growing-up experience. This urgency to "fit in" develops out of: "It's dangerous to be different". (We refer the reader to the Center's article: "It's Dangerous to be Different".)

### **COPYING HUMAN BEHAVIOR**

What emerges out of the human inclination to be "like" those around us is an inadvertent mentally-based predisposition for "copying" others. What we COPY from the behavior of people around us resembles a close likeness of their style of verbalization and the mannerisms they use. But, it is NOT a replica. Each of us is NOT a

CLONE of another person. Consequently, from early on in our lives, the form that our mental development follows is crafted-off the mannerisms and nuances of behavior which we have mentally absorbed. What we incorporate mentally of these mannerisms or nuances turn into items which become integral to our personality.

Observing others is another conditioned mental activity. The action of observing applies to all DEVELOPING HUMAN BEINGS and is common to growing-up mentally. COPYING and OBSERVING are why we GENERATIONALLY resemble each other. That we actually DIFFER from each other relates to INDIVIDUAL mental VARIABLES in perceiving.

As inveterate interpreters of our own experiences, each of us gravitated towards creating a style of mentality which began with the reality of being PARENTED. The "parents" involved are often TWO in number. However, if any of us had been reared in an extended family with uncles, aunts, grandparents, we would have mentally incorporated mannerisms and expressions from a larger sample of human beings.

### **THE EXPERIENCE OF BEING PARENTED**

While we as children copy and mentally integrate the manner and expressions of those caring for us, we are at the same time being subjected to a unique rendering of the performance of "parenting", namely our parents' version. Whatever the parenting configuration, one or more, it is their style which will later determine the foundation of our own "parenting" style. Our later style of parenting, however, will only be revealed when we become parents ourselves.

What we inadvertently witnessed by being around GROWN people, in addition to what we experienced from being PARENTED, amalgamate to produce the personal characteristics of our mental selves. This developmental beginning is UNIVERSAL.

### **HUMAN PERSONALITY DEVELOPS EXPERIENTIALLY**

Personality evolves from a mental maturation process beginning at birth. Mental impressions from the surrounding human environment, impinging upon the child's unadorned, newly-founded mental base, amalgamate to set the tone and style of all future mental productions. The kind of physical parenting experienced provides but few of the impressions contained in the totality of the child's functioning mentality. The child needs parents, only, to ensure his literal survival. A child can't fend for himself at 6 weeks or 6 months.

The main MENTAL RESERVOIR of a child's experience is composed of items inadvertently "copied" from the behavior of people around him. For mental development, he needs the presence of human beings. Thus, he builds the HUMAN BEING framework of his mental functioning.

The developing child mentally absorbs (as in osmosis) the human action surrounding him. Initially, the absorbed impressions assume an unorganized, unsystematized form. The early impressions which become mentally integrated are not chosen by an act of deliberation. That is, they are not acquired in a reasoned manner.

Therefore, those people involved in the task of parenting have no way of determining what impressions their children will mentally absorb. Sorry to destroy the MYTH, but parents do not have the LITERAL power to "orchestrate" the mental "baggage" which their child acquires. Consequently, parents cannot determine the formation or the contents of their child's mental evolution.

Parental in-put is limited to that of "influence". Because parents cannot "cause" a child's mental development, they cannot "dictate", therefore, the make-up of its contents. Human beings aren't fully aware of the type or quality of the human behavior material they mentally absorb. Consequently, no human being can choose what impressions become mentally "filed" or rejected. Therefore, human beings cannot legislate the mental mould from which these emotional impressions will effect future behavior. Only later on in life will the pain-production capacity of those early mental impressions manifest themselves.

Our mental selves developed in concert with the growth of our physical selves. Unlike our physical selves, however, the mental development is divided into two functions, volitional and non-volitional and demarcated respectively by reasoning and reactive mental activity. Over time, functioning mentality continues to mature. Thus, by the time of our old age, the two mental divisions have become highly sophisticated.

## **TWO DISPARATE MENTAL FUNCTIONS**

For clinical reasons and treatment clarity, it is necessary to separate TWO distinct areas of mental production. They highlight disparate mental functions. How our mind works (our functioning mentality), is dependent upon the interaction of these two categories: VOLITIONAL and NON-VOLITIONAL. The VOLITIONAL category delimits the mental area of LOGIC and REASON. Because volitional is not the source of troubling emotional behavior, C-CTHERAPY®'s unified NON-COGNITIVE clinical treatment format addresses only the non-volitional system and its operation.

The NON-VOLITIONAL is exemplified by a REACTIVE or EMOTIONAL-FEELINGS function. It is the union of the volitional and non-volitional aspects of one's functioning mentality which COMBINE, and thus, dictate the character of one's mental production.

## **THE MENTAL STEPS IN NON-VOLITIONAL ACTIVITY**

The steps which we mentally experience when processing our surroundings operate sequentially:

- 1) Our attention is "caught" by some item in our environment. (LOOKING)
- 2) Next, our individual interpretation of the item produces an emotional response. (INTERPRETING)
- 3) Then, our response in this mental sequence produces a behavior. (BEHAVING)

The action of this mental sequence occurs instantly as well as simultaneously. The activity produces emotional reactions of varying degrees. A familiar type of mental response is hardly ever noticed by the individual. We might add, however, that an unfamiliar mental response to a witnessed event would be discerned as odd. Predictability of emotional reaction is a characteristic common to human beings.

With the latter "sequential" framework in mind, we want the reader to note that the mental steps taken are not mentally haphazard or disordered. Instead, they follow each other in an orderly mental fashion. The mental fashion originates from a ready-made "reservoir" of mental functioning -- our parents.

## **SUMMARY**

The reactive mental format created by us is systematic, immediate, orderly, but not always logical to the observer. The following features are characteristic of the non-volitional system in all human beings:

- 1) Our emotional mentality is founded upon a combination of one's "copying" inclination and "being parented" experiences. Their unique combination determines what the contents of a person's reactive system is to be.
- 2) How these contents manifest themselves dictates the portrayal of one's personality.
- 3) A prominent dynamic in our non-volitional system is the "repetitiousness" of thoughts. We experience the repetitious thought-patterns in the form of thoughts "popping" into our mind. Repetition of the mannerisms and the verbal style of those around us in our past, a human scenario performed daily, is the field from which we copied. So as children, we repeatedly witnessed features of behavior characteristic of each person we were inadvertently "copying".

We were just developing our self, so we had unlimited time to absorb, observe and mentally integrate the human activity around us. That process forms the substance of our non-volitional system.

4) The nature of mentally copied material is such that it takes on the manner of habit. Dynamically speaking, it displays a "reflexive" quality. Habit causes us to respond routinely to familiar events from the past. For us to do otherwise would produce a sensation of "strangeness."

5) The nature of the non-volitional system is such that we do not employ a deliberate act of thinking or deciding prior to mentally REACTING. Instead, the nature of reacting is instantaneous, automatic. The produced behavioral format portrays a sequence along these lines: first, some kind of event attracts our attention; second, an immediate interpretation evolves from that data; third, a behavior emerges congruent with the mental interpretation.

6) The assemblage of mental items, specific to our mental selves, guarantees the uniqueness of each of us. The behavior generated by these items is illustrative of our individuality. Thus, each person exhibits a somewhat differing degree and individual version of emotions: anger, disgust, tension, fear, enthusiasm, pleasure.

7) The non-volitional system is not subject to modification by the intervention of logic or mental deliberation. Application of "a change in thinking" as a means of changing our reactions carries little impact. To prove the veracity of this phenomenon, the next time you tell yourself "not to get upset" over something, take note of how successful you are in maintaining that intention. You will experience, as does everyone else, that it is not possible merely by employing GOOD intentions to stifle the power of emotional reactions. Any gains experienced from "good intentions" are only short-lived.

These results occur because, in order to effectively counteract the emotional system, one must employ a precise procedure designed to cope, specifically, with the character of that emotional system. Therefore, when we tell ourselves to "not react", we have mentally created a problem for ourselves by intending to ignore the workings of our emotional system. Consequently, we learn by experience that REASON AND LOGIC lack the power to overwhelm mental activity originating from the non-volitional, emotional pattern.

Non-volitional, emotional patterns are a feature in the human equation. Directly or indirectly, we are in interaction, therefore, with billions of emotional patterns. At any instant in time, about any particular event, there are as many variations to the emotional equation of a single happening as there exists people to either hear of it or

observe its presence. RESEARCH BASEThe above document is the result of field findings garnered since 1964 from patients in our mental health practise. These research findings are now incorporated in the programs of "Center for Counter- Conditioning Therapy®" and it's exclusive non-cognitive psychotherapy, C-CTherapy®.

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