

from an individual working alone, through "consciousness couples" to families and groups. The possibilities for widespread self-directed lay therapy or personal growth are enormous. There is a chapter devoted to the use of the technique with groups. One does not have to be a trained therapist to use the technique although clinical training and experience are an advantage. There seems to be a distinct possibility that many members of eidetic groups could introduce and guide others through such an experience. The technique could revolutionize the course of psychotherapy if it is disseminated carefully. A good instructional manual would help. It should be noted that like most systems of therapy, eidetic analysis makes extensive time demands of weeks and months; however, it is a small price to pay for self-enlightenment.

One Child by Choice, S. Hawke & D. Knox, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1977.

Reviewed by:

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One Child by Choice concerns a controversial and contemporary issue, which is, as the title implies, the "only child" family. The book deals with the myths, advantages and disadvantages of being an only child, from the point of view of the young, the adolescent and the adult "only" child. A section is included on "rearing the single child".

The subject has the potential for relevance to a large audience. However, for the keen and curious-minded reader, this book may be a disappointment. The research population sampled by the authors seems to be limited to those mainly of a white, middle-class background. Frequently, generalizations are made from an anecdotal record of one. Comparisons are often made which reveal an obvious bias in favor of the one child family, when, in fact, the instances compared are inconclusive.

Material acquisition and financial benefits are often espoused by the authors as important advantages, or "pay-offs," of being an only child — at a time when many people apparently are turning away from these as a measure of fulfillment and achievement.

In addition, the prospective reader who is also a student of English syntax should avoid this book.

Above all, the authors have chosen to treat a highly complex topic in a rather simplistic manner; i.e., such factors as communication patters within the family, historical backgrounds of parents, knowledge of parenting and changing life styles, receive only superficial coverage.

The authors do state that couples should have the freedom to choose a family size which is consistent with their own values. The bibliography suggests an extensive review of the available literature; however, the content of the book seems rather more subjective in nature.

In conclusion, *One Child by Choice* is limited in its potential for use by professionals. It may be thought-provoking and provide a topic for discussion by laypeople.

How Real is Real? Paul Watzlawick, New York: Random House, 1976, 266 pp.

Reviewed by:

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Anyone who has read the work of Paul Watzlawick cannot easily forget it. His most recent text, *How Real is Real?* leaves the reader with a challenge. The challenge requires the reader to embark on a journey of confronting "reality" and "communication" in styles very different from conventional counselling perspectives.

The concept which is most central to this recent publication is the definition of reality. Reality, for any of us, is a function of the way we communicate and the rules which tend to define the communication. An example which illustrates this axiom can be found in the schizophrenic-like behaviour which can be induced in a member of a family when the other members begin conveying conflicting or double messages at the same time. Through close examination of everyday paradoxes, semantic punctuation and non-contingency factors within our systems of communication, Watzlawick attempts to show how "our everyday traditional ideas of reality are delusions which we spend substantial parts of our daily lives shoring up even at considerable risk of trying to force facts to fit our definition of reality instead of vice-versa (p. xi)."

The implications of experience being defined through communication for the counsellor cannot be ignored as the author draws attention to the danger of that assuming one's own definition is the only one and adds that this is particularly hazardous when it is held by people who want to or have influence over others. Much of what a counsellor does involves assisting clients to alter their behaviour based upon a change in perception of reality!

The book is refreshing to read in that the author's training in languages, philosophy and clinical psychotherapy surface in a well integrated fashion. It is easy to detect the writer's interest and

respect for an investigation perspective as the book is full of research ideas for graduate students' theses in counselling psychology — particularly in interpersonal communication.

Topics are arranged so that the reader initially comes to appreciate how it is that messages do or do not get through either due to coding or decoding problems and how the subsequent confusion may result in debilitating anxiety and poor coping responses. Second, the topic of disinformation is examined. Evidence is presented which shows how ineptitude or neurotic behavior develops out of uncertainty of feedback for the individual or how the same result can occur by withholding information. The last section of the book makes for fascinating reading, but is probably most removed from the experience of the helping person. The attention here is upon communication with other mammalian forms and extra-terrestrial beings.

Overall the book is exciting. It builds upon the axioms of communication as presented in Watzlawick's earlier book *Pragmatic of Human Communication: A Study of Interactional Patterns, Pathologies and Paradoxes* (1967) plus the clinical connections as set forth in *Change: Principles of Problem Formation and Problem Resolution* (1974).

Since the book is about how we communicate, the complexities involved and consequences of these patterns and systems, *How Real is Real?* should not be overlooked by the counsellor. It provides an indepth look at what we as professionals do throughout our working days and as Watzlawick suggests . . . "a better understanding of communication not only gives us a new view of problems, it also forces us to question old ways of dealing with them (p. 14)".

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