

The Dynamic Family, S. Luthman & M. Kirschenbaum, Palo Alto, California: Science & Behavior Books, 1974, 239 pp. \$7.95.

Reviewed by:

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The authors of *The Dynamic Family* describe their book as a study in the development of growth within the family, the techniques of family therapy, and the training of family therapists. As such, the book is designed primarily for practicing therapists and counsellors, and for educators and students who are interested in working with the family unit.

As former students of Virginia Satir, both authors pay tribute to her teaching and build upon the model of growth and interactional theory developed by Satir, Don Jackson, Gregory Bateson, and Jay Haley. On the basis of their experience as therapists, co-therapists, and teachers, Luthman and Kirshenbaum have added to the literature by presenting a realistic approach to family therapy.

With regard to content organization, by far the largest part of the book deals with basic interactional theory, change theory, and applied therapy techniques. The remaining forty or so pages include an open appraisal of male-female co-therapy, a brief discussion of the author's training program for students, and a short section on the concept of stress as a potential promoter of therapist development.

The concept of growth as the goal of family therapy, as well as the teaching and learning of effective interactional and communicative processes as the key to that growth, represents the authors' main thesis. According to Luthman and Kirshenbaum, growth is a dynamic process in which family members produce, create, and express differentness in ways that promote their individual health and well-being. At the same time, the healthy functioning of the family unit is promoted. An open family system which recognizes and supports the growth of its members becomes the objective of therapy.

My positive reaction to *The Dynamic Family* is generated by the authenticity of the authors' knowledge, skill, and value system. The reader senses that Luthman and Kirshenbaum have fully experienced the theory and therapy of which they write and have compiled the book as a means of sharing with others their understanding of family dynamics and their practice of family therapy. The style of writing, refreshingly free of jargon,

promotes easy reading. Methods of intervention are presented clearly, often with well-chosen examples to illustrate various points. Generally the link between theory and practice is evident although, from the point of view of this reviewer, more demonstration of the relationship between the concept of growth and the interventions chosen would be helpful, especially to beginning therapists.

A criticism offered in regard to this book concerns the lack of a bibliography following each chapter or major section. The dozen or so titles which appear at the end of the book seem inadequate in terms of the theoretical contrasts presented throughout the text. In this respect use of the book for counsellors in training, or students in related fields, could be enhanced with a handout indicating reading sources relevant to each section.

Overall, *The Dynamic Family* is a particularly readable account of family theory and therapy as practiced by two experienced therapists who apply the growth model within an interactional framework. While especially useful to established and beginning family therapists, including student practitioners, the book could serve as a valuable source to those in the helping professions who are interested in or who work with families.

The Cooperating Family: How Your Children Can Help Manage the Household For Their Good as Well As Yours, Eleanor Berman, Englewood-Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1977. 166 pp. \$8.50.

Reviewed by:

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The Cooperating Family is a pleasant surprise; what appears at first glance to be the "Ladies Home Journal" approach, (that is, "No problem is too big to be handled by supermom") is definitely not in that style. It is obvious that Mrs. Berman has had considerable experience with household management from the professional woman's point of view, and her approach to the subject is a refreshing and useful source for the single parent. Mrs. Berman is not full of pat answers to serious child care problems nor does she recommend referral to unobtainable resources south of the border.

In the first chapter the author describes her original intention to keep the day to day lifestyle of her home as unchanged as possible following her divorce. Everything within the household was

organized around the children's schedules; Mrs. Berman's own free time was placed second to their interests. What she noted about this type of lifestyle was that it was very close to the pattern that she had established as a mother within a two parent family.

The account of the child-oriented household is followed by some hard data pertaining to sex role stereotyping. It is here that the book provides greater depth than at first is evident. Without losing the personal experience orientation, a more scientific approach is used in the initial chapters to support the recommendations which follow. For this reason, this book provides useful information for clients who, although they may have single parent status in common, are from different educational levels. This publication integrates the practical guidelines necessary for goalsetting with data pertaining to working women in a palatable fashion. References to other publications relating to this changing aspect of society are footnoted throughout the text.

Mrs. Berman provides an excellent description of how she started the cooperating family with some examples of conversations that may take place with those who will be most intimately involved — the children. An eleven point summary at the completion of Chapter 4 provides a quick and easy review.

This publication provides more than the friendly reminder to the working mother that if she is sufficiently well organized with household management and child care tasks, she can cope with the three jobs that now form the basis for her new set of responsibilities. Mrs. Berman describes some of the reasons which account for the "martyr" or "supermom" syndrome which appears to form the basis for the popular premise towards motherhood.

To the working mother, a home emergency can be one of the most devastating occurrences since not all employers are understanding during a home crisis. Again, Mrs. Berman's solution in Chapter 9 is education for all members of the family.

If there is one theme that runs throughout this book, it is education. Mrs. Berman clearly outlines guidelines for educating the family so that they are well prepared for their cooperative responsibilities. *The Cooperating Family* is an excellent resource for the single parent and could well provide material for discussion groups and counsellor education.

Change: Principles of Problem Formation and Problem Resolution, Paul Watzlawick, John H. Weakland, and Richard Fisch. New York: W.W. Norton, 1974.

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Change has become a contemporary classic for theory and techniques of brief therapy useful to both family and individual counsellors. The book is envisioned by its authors as a broad study of persistence and change — how human problems arise, are perpetuated, and are solved. Its most salient theme highlights the frequent inadequacy of common sense solution to interpersonal problems (first order change), and the amazing success of seemingly illogical, unexpected solutions (second order change). The examples dotted throughout the book are taken from the authors' experiences at the Brief Therapy Center of the Mental Research Institute in Palo Alto, as well as from novels, movies, politics, science, and history. *Change's* organizational layout proceeds from the abstract and theoretical in Part One to the concrete and practical in Part Three. For the majority of readers, the varied examples of paradoxical intervention and therapeutic reframing in Part Three will be the kernel of the book.

In Part One of *Change*, Watzlawick, Weakland, and Fisch present the two mathematical theories which they have adopted as models for persistence and change in human affairs. They briefly explain principles from mathematical group theory which may be construed as analogous to human behaviour in its persistence and repetitiveness. These theorems, presented in layman's terms, demonstrate the principles of first order change. In behavioural terms, if one's perspective is confined to a finite set of possible actions, any combinations of these potential actions will result in another member of the group, or another element from the familiar frame of reference. Change can occur within the defined group or perspective, but the outcome of this first order change never lifts the person beyond a limited set of alternatives circumscribed by his constricted point of view. Whitehead and Russell's Theory of Logical Types, the second major mathematical model presented in *Change*, offers, by contrast, an analogy to the more effective and therapeutic second order change. Second order change involves a major shift in perspective that allows a person to transcend his previously restricted frame of reference and to see a widened and/or re-grouped set of alternative actions. Although the authors are ingenious in drawing parallels between these abstract mathematical models and