

Review

Corrupting the young and other stories of a family therapist.

Lang, T., and Lang, M.

Corrupting the young and other stories of a family therapist.

No. Balwyn, Victoria, Australia: Rene Gordon Pty Ltd., 1986, 169 pp.

In reading the introductory pages of this slim paperback, and the fifty or so “stories” that follow, the reader is privileged to meet unusually warm and perceptive couple. Moshe and Tesse Lang express their hope that the stories will “tickle the fancy” of their readers. They do far more than that. Through the tales they tell, even the brief vignettes they share, the Langs provide insights, deflate professional egos, and offer food for thought.

Several times we are shown – quietly, subtly – that it is not the identified patient who has the problem. Through other anecdotes, we see that traditional approaches often lead us away from accurate perceptions, and that patients being moved through “the system” too frequently become the sum of their files. The Langs quite correctly aver that “no person is as crazy as their file” (p 72). Some of the stories evoke a chuckle; others cause a quizzically raised eyebrow; all enlighten.

The book takes less than two hours to read; its insights will take considerably longer to absorb. Once read, one could go back repeatedly for a “lift”, an eye-opener, or a memory jogger. I heartily recommend it to family therapists (and other mental health professionals) for its understated but numerous virtues.

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