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"THE FAMILY CRUCIBLE" *The Intense Experience of Family Therapy* by Augustus Napier and Carl Whitaker. Harper and Row, 1978. Price \$11.95.

I spend a lot of my time listening to family therapists describing their work with families. Despite this I found "The Family Crucible" so gripping I couldn't put it down. Also I felt envious of the authors for their ability to write so well and so simply and to bring to life so vitally the process of the therapeutic encounter. This was particularly so because they write about a very "ordinary" family presented with a very "ordinary" problem.

Essentially the book is an account of the therapy of one family over about a two year period with Napier and Whitaker as co-therapists. Whilst I have serious doubts about the justification of co-therapy, this book contains some most compelling arguments in favour of co-therapy, as well as actually presenting a very live and interesting example of how it can be creatively used.

During the therapeutic process, work is done in the main with the nuclear family. However at an appropriate stage in therapy the grandparents and aunt are involved. This presents an interesting model for working with three generations in which everyone is getting something for himself from the therapy.

For the reader there are beautiful human touches and delightful examples of the use of the paradox. There is also controversy over the therapists' expectations that the parents discuss their sex life in front of their children. In fact the preliminary exploration of the parents' sex life is done by asking the children about it. Even though I disagree with this tactic, they make their argument fairly convincing and their handling of the situation appears correct. Interposed

into this account are some general theoretical discussions that flow naturally from the description of the therapy. To those of us who believe that systems theory cannot be reconciled and integrated with concepts and ideas derived from psycho analysis and the human growth movement, this book presents a challenge. Certainly the therapy for this family seems to have its own internal consistency and logic, and on the human level these various concepts fit together well. Whether or not real integration of these theories can be achieved is not dealt with in the book.

For a long time I have believed that a major point of change occurs in therapy when the therapist behaves in an unusual, unexpected and "unprofessional" manner, when he does or says things which he may be reluctant to acknowledge unless in a safe situation and to a small number of people. Thus it was a pleasure for me to read of such behaviour by Dr. Whitaker.

I believe this book has a very important place in that small list which can be strongly recommended to the lay public and, at the same time, a "must" to any practising family therapist.

Finally after reading this review I was struck by the extent to which it is of a personal nature. I consider it an appropriate response to a very personal account of therapy and written for a journal which I hope will encourage "I" statements.

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