

CHILD DIANETICS PART II

A lecture given on
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Working Within a Child's Natural Limitations

The youngest child I have ever processed was 4 years of age and the oldest one I have ever processed was 98! They were equally difficult.

The problem confronting the auditor in Child Dianetics is first and foremost the problem of accessibility. A child does not like to remain quiet. And a child who has been rather badly used in his lifetime is rather prone to resist attention from a grown-up. As a result, that problem of accessibility will stare you straight in the face with any child with whom you work. Your problems are solved, or not solved, on the basis of your ability to establish accessibility.

Furthermore, a child is a problem in self-control. A control circuit is a phrase in an engram which lays into the human being the command "Control yourself" and which takes over a part of the analyzer and installs a false "I" in the mind. Natural self-control is the ability of "I" to control the organism, and as false self-control circuits are eliminated, "I" is more and more able to control the organism until a person starts to pull in toward clear, at which point he can exert a self-control that no circuit ever possibly could have given him.

A child is a problem in self-control because he does not have very much of it, particularly if he has been rather badly used and his attention is very scattered. With an adult you can work fairly easily because his attention is channeled and you usually merely have to turn it back in against his engrams. With children there is the additional step of gathering the attention up, focusing it and then turning it back in against the locks and engrams. The problem of attention covers the whole field of therapy, not just Child Dianetics.

Attention which is very broadly spread is hunting for something on which to fix. It has no targets. This results in an interesting psychic condition known as fear of the unknown, a special kind of fear in that there is danger in the vicinity and yet one cannot select out exactly what is dangerous. As a result, the person begins to be afraid of the unknown because he cannot target it. His attention will then be very badly scattered as he is looking all the way around him.

Then there is fear of a specific object, in which attention becomes too closely channeled and too frozen in one place. This is approximated by being stuck on the time track. It means that attention units are there looking into the interior world at a danger, a menace or a command, which makes it impossible for the person to move easily on the track. That is too close an attention toward the interior world.

There is also the case where these attention units of the interior world (the engram bank) are unable to locate any specific trouble; they are merely scattered all the way up and down the bank, looking everywhere. This person is afraid interiorly of an unknown.

There are four specific conditions. There is the exterior world closely fixated, with attention narrowly channeled (if attention gets too fixated it reduces the analyzer to suboptimum levels); there is the attention too widely scattered on the exterior world, where one cannot locate a danger but knows and feels a danger is present; and in the interior world you get the same two conditions.

A child who is afraid is usually in a highly scattered state of mind, because the child's data is very light. His standard banks haven't enough data in them to permit him to select out what is wrong and identify it and so be able to look at it. Instead of this he looks at a wide unknown

world, merely because portions of this world are not identified to him. Hence, the extreme terror and fears of childhood. And they are intense.

The world of the child is one of giants and dragons, not because all childhood is delusion, but simply because childhood does not have enough data. Children cannot label everything; therefore they get this spread of attention and a fear of the unknown. In a neurotic child, it is normally this which is the trouble.

So a whole therapy comes into view: the identification of situations and objects on an educational level. You give the child more data. What is wrong with this child is that he does not have enough data and so he does not understand; he is suffering from fear of the unknown. The first and foremost remedy for this is to give the child more data. And don't give him incorrect data; give him the best data you can.

You start in on this child and simply get him to define words and have him define objects and their uses. You will find that he has the weirdest misconceptions of the world in which he is living, handed to him by the adults around him. You can straighten out a tremendous amount with a child just on that level. You fix up his labels for him.

To this degree, the late Count Korzybski was very much down the groove. You follow along the line of relabeling things for people and reorienting them by General Semantics and you find that with a child it has a much, much larger efficiency than with an adult because you are not just reorienting the child, you are actually labeling the world for him.

You will find out that most grown-ups are very poorly oriented about the world themselves and that not only have they given this child poor orientation and general lack of attention but they have given the child bad orientation. They have given the child, for instance, Eugene Field, whose ballad about Johnnie and Frankie, written one night when he was waiting for the results of a fight, was probably his great and only poem; the rest of it should be burned. Field laid into the society a number of traps for children. I think he actually hated children and he certainly got his revenge.

Take, for instance, a child with no data on the subject of death. Some ally sings to the child about the little tin soldier and the little toy dog and the angel's song, and how they took Little Boy Blue away and so forth. The child asks, "Well, what's death?"

"Death is when you go to hell."

"What's hell?"

"That's where they have fire! And if you're not a good boy you go to hell and that's the way this all works out."

"Huh?"

Now you would not consider that data, but to a child it is.

" 'Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take.' What's my soul?"

"Well, dear, that's something inside of you."

Now, catch him late at night when he is tired, and maybe this poor little child is an attempted abortion case, and he gets told the soul is something inside of him! You are going to discover this same computation in many a preclear whereby he doesn't dare get rid of his engrams. Why? Because the Lord will take his soul! What is his soul? That is him! Well, how come it's him? Because he is inside of Mama! It computes.

Yet this is the kind of data we give our little children. The poem Little Orphan Annie I have found responsible for more upset in children than any other single piece of work.

“His daddy heard him holler and his mama heard him shout, . . .” and they went upstairs and there was nothing there but a pile of clothes. The goblins had gotten him.

Yet they talk about childhood delusion! I think we had better talk about grown-up delusion, whereby we must build a world of complete asininity for this poor little child. Of course he does not have to buy this nonsense, but it is absolutely unnecessary to communicate with a child on this level. It is so childish that a lot of grown-ups ought to be spanked for having started it in the first place. A child is perfectly logical; he has got good sense. There is no sense telling him that goblins exist, that there is a place called hell where he will burn forever, and that this soul inside him is going to be taken by the Lord who, as far as he is concerned, does not exist. He cannot reach out and grab this person. Sir James Jeans and a lot of other people have been looking and trying to identify just what this was for a long time and they have not found him yet! And yet they expect this little child of 2, 3 or 4 years of age to say “I pray the Lord . . .”

“You mean he’s going to come when I’m asleep?”

“Well, yes. It’s all right, dear. Go to sleep. Be calm.”

This child’s early life, until he gets the world around him properly labeled and into some kind of focus, is a world of terror. Take some little child who has got some engrams jumping. You may not be able to reach these engrams because you cannot get this child’s attention channeled to you. If you can get him into reverie, you will find out as you start back down the bank that he has got a prenatal bank that a 35-year-old preclear with all of his understanding would not dare face.

You will find the track sown with quarrels and brutalities of a kind which you cannot ask a little child 4, 5 or 6 years of age to face. He just cannot do it! He hasn’t enough analyzer. His analytical mind is not fully developed physiologically, and he does not have a good, full bank of data, so he has no way to evaluate new data against old data. Suppose the child has not got any data; it is impossible to evaluate new data against no data. As a result, you are up against a computational difficulty of no data and an attention difficulty of the child’s never having learned to channel, handle and focus his attention in any way. This is somewhat educated into a person by life.

Furthermore, he is insufficiently capable of handling his own body. He cannot make his body do all the things which a human being should permit his body to do, and consequently he can’t get his analytical mind to send him back down the track so that he can pick up engrams expertly.

You will weep over some of these children. You will find that you can get them back to a sleigh ride or to the time they went swimming, and they are pianola; they run with ease. They go exactly where you want them to go on the track. But you can only work them for about five minutes at a time! They get bored. They come up to present time and they want some candy and they want to go out and play.

You have to corral them, bribe them and plead with them, and use various imaginative tricks in order to attract their attention. You say, “Well, let’s play a game and let’s go back to the time when Mama caught you and punished you.” But that is one place this child is not supposed to go. Well, here is a beating which merely had to do with a few hits in the head with a clenched fist—”mild” American punishment! And if this child can’t go back and face that, how do you expect him to go back and face a real knock-down, drag-out fight which has an extremely high pain level, or run through his recent tonsillectomy?

I am afraid that standard therapy is barred to a child until he has been educated into the handling of his own body and has enough data so that he can evaluate data.

This leaves us rather up in the air as to what we do with a child in processing. The first thing I always do when I start children is to give them Straightwire. I try to get their attention on themselves by making them remember things. I fix up a memory game by saying "I bet I can remember more things than you can about such-and-such a thing," and maybe get them going along in that fashion. There are dozens of ways you can do this and get them going on Straightwire.

You will find that their memories are fairly good because ordinarily only a few of their engrams have keyed in, which is very much in your favor.

Now take them back to the last time they were hurt slightly and run it out. If you can manage to show them this one, you are in.

I have seen a child of 8 who was relatively unable to handle himself in any way, who had finally been persuaded to run out the last minor injury of his life and would thereafter pick up his own whippings as fast as they were given to him. (This was his own idea.) His papa told me about this. Papa felt outraged. He was going to all the trouble of whipping this child and then the child would walk out on the back porch, go back to the first moment of the whipping and run it out! Papa was really checkmated on that one.

The last injury has not been keyed in very much, so you can always auto on it and knock it out.

If you can teach the child what you are doing, you are a fair way to being able to pick up late life locks and minor engrams. But don't suppose that because you have gone this far you can immediately get back to basic-basic and do anything about that, because you probably won't be able to. This merely means that a child is willing to work on locks.

If a child can do this, you can get grief off his case; and realize that the most you can do for a child is to get grief off his case. Start picking up moments of grief and you will be astounded at the level of it. Somebody took Bessie's doll—a big moment of grief; the teacher didn't look quite right in the classroom—a big moment of grief. And children will spill tears.

You can ease up enough tension in this way so that the child can be fairly well balanced, and that should be your first target with children.

You will run into children, however (and I have run into one or two isolated cases), where they have been told not to cry. This seals in all the grief on the case, and it does not matter whether it is done sympathetically or angrily, you are going to have a tough time. But you can even get back to that with the child, using Straightwire.

Children, then, are a problem of deintensifying cases, not clearing them. That is important. Your goal is to bring the child up so that he can get along better, rather than to clear him. Your goal is a release, and it should be started on the basis of picking up grief.

There are several ways of tackling this problem.

1. Educate the parents in what they do to this child so that the child can level out and fly right—just patch up his environment.
2. Educate and redefine the child's terms by simply telling him what the known world is about.

I don't mean educate him by teaching him spelling. I mean a type of education which is never performed on children until you call it to people's attention.

For instance, "This is a steam radiator. The steam from this radiator comes from a furnace in the basement. Coal is put on the furnace in the basement and the fire heats up the water and that comes up in this steam radiator."

"Oh, is that how that thing gets hot!"

You take a 3-, 4- or 5-year-old child and start educating him and you will be amazed. It is a function this society does not do. They leave it to a 7- or 8-year-old child to do.

The way a child learns language is, to me, utterly fantastic. When I listen to some of the English the child is taught, and the identification and stated functions he is given of objects in the world around him, I don't understand how a child ever knows English.

So we have got this strata of taking an interest and interesting him in the real world around him and properly defining things. But we have to do that on a companionship basis, not upon an authoritarian basis. If we are crushing this child with data all the time, the data will not be assimilated; it will merely be parked in the bullpens where most education resides. In fact, I think most college graduates have still got their whole college education parked over in the bullpen. Itb not assimilated.

Telling this person "The reason you have to know this is simply because we are going to ask you on an examination" could hardly be called education. That is merely saying "If you will pick up this data and memorize it and spit it back when we tell you to, you are then educated."

In such a wise you cannot follow this program with a child. What you have got to do is get the child interested in the real world.

Trying to interest a child in a hobby is difficult if you choose the hobby. Let the child choose the hobby, then let him show how proficient he can get in it, and you will find out that something new takes place. This child is learning a skill.

Learning a skill alone would not be good enough unless it had some side effect to do with processing. And it does. This child is not able to control his own body very well; he hasn't been educated. You are giving him precision control of his own body, and you build that precision control of his own body up by teaching him. You don't have to choose academic subjects; you can have him walking tightropes or learning how to fry eggs. The whole world is not a set of selected subjects that somebody wrote down in a book. This is the business of living. This child has to have skills in the business of living, and if they are interesting to him, that is what you want.

All play is mock performance of future emergencies and future works. The purpose of play is to practice the individual in the handling of self, so that in the future when those skills and coordinations are needed they will be present. Anybody who thinks play is anything else has given it a false value. And play treated that way really becomes play too.

Have you ever seen hectic, tired businessmen out there "playing" because they have been told that this is for their health, that they are working too hard on their jobs, and therefore they had better learn how to play for a while? It is fine for this person to go out and learn a new skill if he thinks he can do anything with it, but the further that skill departs from any practical application in the future, the less efficacy it will have in straightening up his mental and physical health. He has got to have a goal before the play means anything. And in such a wise it is with children.

The child has to see that what he is doing leads toward an actual effect in his life. Just by showing him that certain things in his life will lead up to certain other things in his life, you can occasionally invite his interest enormously.

For instance, take embroidery. Teaching a little girl needlework seems to be a far cry from anything. It isn't done these days. These days what is done in the home is teaching a little girl to look at a television set! But you could teach a little girl embroidery. The child is always seeking approval, just as any human being is. This isn't peculiar to children. A person who doesn't seek approval is really in bad shape.

So this child likes to do this intricate needlework, and you have a concentration then of the mind on the handling of the body. When you build this up sufficiently the mind can handle the engrams, because engrams are the impingement of thought and the turbulence of matter, energy, space and time upon life. Unless you get thought up to a point where it can overcome those turbulences, the turbulences are going to be further enforced by matter, energy, space and time.

You have got to educate and build this child up to a point where he can handle his own body, and when he can coordinate and handle himself skillfully, he has learned self-discipline.

One cannot talk to a child about self-discipline because this is something that is a native and natural mechanism. It isn't something that is installed with a club the way so many people believed in the past. It is something that comes about. He learns, for instance, that although his body would like to go and eat dinner right now, if he writes just a few more lines in this notebook he will be finished and he won't have to worry about it later. The body says, "I'm hungry," but he doesn't immediately abandon the notebook. There you're getting to the point where thought and life are overcoming the physical needs of the body, so you get thought superimposed over the top of it. The end product of all this is easier and easier processing.

You usually start with badly disassociated, nervous and upset children who when you say "Boo" to them jump a foot off the deck; and when whipped up a little bit they go into high hysteria and run around the room breaking everything in it, interrupting the grown-up's conversation, and then go outside, get on a tricycle, fall into the gutter and cut their heads open. Normal children! If you have ever watched children play, that is the usual sequence. One is prone to look at his own society and say, "This is natural; this is native; this is the way human beings are everywhere." But if you go out and examine a few other civilizations, you will find out that this is not the way they are everywhere.

I know of about five societies in which children sit around rather sedately, practicing to be men and women, and they are very happy. They are not constrained and nobody beats them. They are accepted members of the society. They have their work to do and they take pride in doing it. They are liable to certain clumsinesses and so forth occasionally, and they feel bitterly ashamed of themselves when they are guilty of such things.

The strange thing in this society is that if grown-ups didn't come in and stir up little babies, and if their idea of play were not to throw them up against the ceiling and things like that, little children would grow up with such an enormous sense of dignity that it would be very interesting to watch.

I have known children in this society who grew up with a very great concept of their own personal worth and a feeling of great dignity. I got very interested in this and in finding out when a child begins to feel dignity. By taking a person back down the time track I found dignity very much present in a 2-month-old child.

Somebody comes in and says, "Kitchy-kitchy-coo."

And the child says, "Who the heck is this?" But he can't express it in words.

So we take this so-called normal child whose parents are worried about him because he gets a cold, has asthma and is sick. They say, "We've done everything in the world we can for this child." (You echo to yourself, "And probably everything in the world that you could do to him!") "What do we do with him? He is sick."

The first thing you can try to do is to take the child by himself without the parents. Get them very definitely off the scene. Try to examine a child around his parents and you will find that he is falsely valuing everything. He is still a bit squirrely. The bulk of children, if you sit them down in a chair in your office or wherever you are working and talk to them on a rather dignified level, will talk to you also on a rather dignified level. And you have entered the case right at that moment because the child is not spinning. He is more in possession of self!

Treat the child on as adult a level as possible, and don't talk baby talk to him. Then start giving the child Straightwire, without saying it is Straightwire and without explaining what all this is about. You will find out that you can go right along with most cases and start blowing locks very rapidly.

However, the span of attention is limited, so never make therapy onerous by demanding that it go longer than the natural span of attention of the child. If you are only getting in five minutes a day on this child, be content. Don't start to claw and paw and contain this child and force him to go into more processing than he can stand.

Have you ever had a child on your lap sitting there enjoying himself, just talking about something or eating candy, and then you wrapped your arms around the child lightly in a closed loop without hurting him? That child immediately wants to be gone.

One of the saddest things that can be done to life is to imprison and constrain it against its own will. That is why we have invented the prison, because it breaks men. The same thing happens with a child. So, if you try to carry over the period of natural attention span with this child, he is immediately going to start getting restive and you are going to have to use constraint.

The way that child is going to act to constraint is by being out of contact with you the next time, because you are just like every other grown-up—you try to pen him up. So don't link yourself up with the rest of the world of grown-ups. He is a different human being when he sees you; this is perfectly clear. You can talk to him on a different strata than he talks to other people—a grown-up strata.

Don't contain his attention units too long. When he starts to get restless and his attention wanders, follow the wandering of this attention to keep up your agreement with him, and let him wander right on out into whatever he wants to wander out into and that's the end of that. Let him go home. The next time you see him, he will be perfectly agreeable to work with.

But to tell this child that he has to have this done, that he has to sit there, that he must listen to you and so on, is no good.

Let's say that you couldn't get the child to sit down in a chair or remember anything, and the child's attention was wandering and so forth. You would see him a minute or two every few days and merely say, "How are you, Billy? How do you feel today?" without paying any attention to his parents. This is for the child. You are not giving processing to the parents. They don't exist as far as you are concerned. Don't talk to them over the head of Billy. You talk to Billy! You will accrue to yourself all the broken affinity that that parent has experienced with the child if you talk to the parent over the head of the child. He is your point of interest, so you just talk to him as himself even if you have to ignore Mama. Soon this child is going to start to come around as far as you are concerned.

In Child Dianetics you can expect to cover the field with a lot more patience and endurance than you would expect to, even in adult processing. You have got to be persistent to that degree. You have got to be able to adapt your attitude to that of the child. If you can do these things, you are going to get results. You will eventually get the child into Straightwire. By this time the child will be straighter and more dignified, and he will talk to you and remember things for you.

Don't strain his attention beyond the point where he can naturally hold it. It is not that this child wants to be bad and go away; his attention is naturally and natively limited just by structural difficulties. So away he goes and you see him again.

Now, if you have got him on Straightwire, what you want to work him into finally is some grief, and you do this by running pleasure moments on him. You run this game of "Let's go back and do so-and-so." But don't run him through pleasure moments to the point where he gets bored with this game, because he will get bored with running pleasure moments. Remember, unlike grown-ups, present time is usually pleasurable to a child!

So you run a few of these pleasure moments and get the child back, gradually working with him, building up his confidence with you and building up your affinity with him to a point where he will go back and blow grief charges. If you can get a lot of grief off this case, the chances are that the chronic somatics will just blow up without your having to hit their source.

In order to proof the child against future key-in, tell the parents about restimulation and emotional upsets around the child and how it comes about that the child gets into this condition.

What you are trying to do in the early years of the child is to blow a few locks and get off some grief.

Don't take children back down the track. Don't take them into the prenatal area, because you are liable to get into material which you will merely restimulate and have to go off and leave because the child is physiologically incapable of running it. His thought is not in sufficient control of the body.

During the whole course of processing that you give the child (and you may be at it for quite a while, because you are only at it maybe once every two or three days for a few minutes), set up for this child a program of acquiring skills both physically and mentally, but more physically than mentally. The child has got to learn how to handle his body.

If you find that this child is impossible to process and that you cannot get anywhere with him, then you set up a program of educational therapy as a method of gaining access to the case. The three valid therapies in Dianetics are

1. Knocking apart engrams with Dianetic processing
2. Educational therapy in all of its ramifications
3. Handling the environment

Shifting the environment of the individual will very often produce marked results all by itself, as will educating the individual or processing him. You have got to play the whole piano when you are treating children.

If this child is sickly, and the parents are really concerned about him, let's see if we can select out of his environment the most restimulative factors and get rid of them.

One little boy who was terribly allergic to Mama was being taken to all manner of health resorts by Mama because he was so sickly. Of course, every place he went, he just carried along the source of his illness.

You can't tell a mother in so many words "You are so restimulative to your child that your child is going to go right on being sick," but you can try and educate Mama, or you can give Mama some processing. If Papa is the one who is really interested in the situation, you sell Papa on the idea of your processing Mama. A second dynamic will clean up quickly enough so that Mama's attitude toward the child will shift.

In processing a child you have to evaluate the child's environment and you may additionally have to treat one or more adults in that child's vicinity. People will be so interested in the health of this child that they will permit themselves to be processed for the benefit of the child when they won't permit themselves to be processed for their own benefit. The strength of this future-generation drive is an interesting thing.

The next thing you can do with a child, which is part of his acquiring skills, is to try to set up some continuing steps of achievement—goals. You want to see if you can give this child a feeling of pride in himself and a feeling of independence about a certain thing. There must be at least one thing in a child's life about which he has the only say-so.

Take some little boy who is walking down the street and is blinded by a window of musical instruments. He sees this beautiful accordion and suddenly decides, "I want to play the accordion." So he whines and he pleads and he's bad and he's good and so on until finally people break down and say, "Well, all right! We will see if we can get you some accordion lessons." The next thing you know, he acquires a small accordion and goes off to the teacher. He and the teacher probably get along all right, because most musical teachers get along all right, in spite of the cartoons, and he finally learns to play something on the accordion.

All of a sudden his family begin to realize "Why, there is Johnnie playing on the accordion. Hmm. Well, I always thought it was a good idea to start him in on the accordion. I'm glad I started him in on the accordion. It was up to me, of course. I made up my mind about it and then I must have made up his mind about it." Very soon they are controlling Johnnie's accordion playing. In other words, they come over from controlling Johnnie. Here was something he really wanted to do.

The next step is "Let's see if we can't get in there with him on this." So they will say, "Well now, you must practice an hour and seventeen minutes every day; it says so right here in the book. You are not going to go out and play because you are going to stay in here and practice. Now, you hit the wrong note on this." This is no longer Johnnie's accordion and it is no longer Johnnie's music, and Johnnie will take that accordion and junk it!

Then the parents will say, "Well, you know how children are. They're flighty. They change their minds. They just don't concentrate. They don't know what they want next."

If you examine this course you will find out that the child selected something he wanted to do and then was forced to do it or interfered with in his doing it, and he found out that this was not an independent sphere of action so he abandoned it. You get a child who has been going along the line of shifting from one thing to the next, and you will find in each case he has been interfered with as to his independence of action.

You as an auditor want to make sure that Johnnie has reserved to himself, alone and exclusively, at least one sphere of action in which he is completely independent, particularly one which includes physical and mental skill. That may not seem to be very important, but he has got to have some place where he has an independent sphere and in which he himself can do some shining, because as he shines, his own idea of his own importance will increase and he will be able to pull in attention units out of this wide periphery of the unknown and concentrate them on an object. This will diminish some of his fears, and in this way you can probably bring Johnnie into a state of sanity which he might not have fully enjoyed before.

It is interesting that on a conversational level, just with Straightwire, you can straighten out some of the major problems of Johnnie's life. They are really that light. They depend on no data.

One 8-year-old girl I was talking to one day was failing in arithmetic; she had always failed in arithmetic, and was very bad in the subject. So I gave her a problem. I said, "If an airplane is traveling at the height of 10,000 feet at 2 o'clock, and at 3 o'clock comes down to a height of 5,000 feet and a man jumps out, how far does the man fall before he hits the ground?" And she

thought, and thought, and thought. We went over this thing for about an hour and she just could not get the answer to this problem. But the odd part of it was that she could add a column of figures— $2 + 2 = 4$ —and she could add them rather well.

I finally isolated out of her the fact that she was unable to do anything about problems. It required some auditor insight at that moment to recognize that she had a cross-up on the word problem. So I said, “Does anybody ever call you a problem?”

She looked at me for a moment and then said, “Oh, you mean that kind of a problem!” and the word problem suddenly came apart into two halves. She went back to school and started to get A’s in arithmetic.

There is the simplicity that you are dealing with.

You can work with children on this level and you can gain diamonds in getting them moving along. What you are doing is redifferentiating and relabeling their lives. You are telling them what data is. You are giving them straight information. You are not telling them “The goblins are going to get you,” or “Now I lay me down to sleep.” You’re not saying that “children must always honor their father and mother” without bothering to tell the child what parents have to do to be honored.

In Child Dianetics you can count on two things: Parents are going to be very anxious to have their children be better and healthier, and parents are only in a very limited degree going to take your advice. Those two things can be depended on. The parents will remain anxious and they will not expedite.

Therefore, you can expect in all processing of children the way to be hard, the work to be long, your patience to have to be at a very high level and your own imagination to be very good, because you have to have an insight into the problems at hand. You are going to have to work with a lot less data than you need to solve the problem.

One little boy came to me one day and could not be processed. I would ask a question and get no response. The insight into that case was picked up in the first two minutes of play: “Which one of your parents told you they would punish you if you told me anything about their quarreling?”

Immediate tears. “Both of them.”

How was I supposed to do anything with that child if the parents told him he was not supposed to tell me anything about his home life or their quarrels? Was I supposed to talk about his playing Lone Ranger? (As it turned out, they were quite certain that reading comic books had been responsible for aberrating him.)

These two people, in the course of their marital misnavigation out in the middle of a hurricane, quite customarily fought at every meal, and this child could not be gotten to eat. He was starving to death! Food equaled fight in their lives.

Papa and Mama would sit down at the table to a nice meal and Papa would start complaining about the food. Mama would complain about how hard she had to work, and it was quite usual and ordinary for them to pick up the crockery and shy it at each other, and not extraordinary for the child to be hit. This had been going on ever since he could be moved up to the table, and this child, who should have weighed somewhere around 85 pounds, was down to about 48 pounds and doing very badly. That gives you some idea of the problems you are going to run into.

Fortunately childhood is so resilient and children are naturally so healthy that it doesn’t take very much to key out what is wrong and bring them up to battery again. The prescription in this case was merely Straightwire on the first time the parents quarreled, picking it on up the line.

Of course it was all through the prenatal bank, but it keyed out fairly quickly. (I'm calling it Straightwire now but it didn't have that technical name at the time; it was merely "discussion of the matter.") And the next thing was to insist that the child be permitted to eat in the kitchen with a closed door.

When I announced this to the parents, both of them looked daggers at me and said, "What has that child been telling you?" I could see right away that the child was going to be punished, because the parents were evidently much more anxious to punish this child than they were to have the child get well!

So I said, "Well, I happen to know that the child can gain a considerable amount of weight if this is done, and I know that if this is done the child will gain weight. Therefore in the next couple of weeks the child will gain weight or I call the Humane Society." That was the end of that. The child gained weight!

Another poor, sickly little child I came across had a mother who used to go in and get him whenever there was a quarrel, sit him up in a chair and make him sit there and listen. The child would be sound asleep, and Mama would come in and frighten him to death by grabbing him out of his bed, slamming him down in a chair and saying "Sit there! Stay there! Now you've got to listen." That was both a holder and a demon circuit. The moral lesson the child was supposed to learn was how horrible it was to be married to a man, and it was this child's duty to sit there and listen.

As an auditor you are going to discover a lot of interesting things about married life. You are probably going to begin to wonder after a while why anybody invented the confounded institution if they didn't intend to do any better with it than they are doing.

Some people fortunately do quite well. I would say at least 10 percent of the population have no marital trouble as far as the children are concerned, and actually most people try in their various untutored ways to keep the children out of all of the trouble and grief, and there are a lot of happy children around.

No happier children have I ever seen, however, than the children of a couple of parents who were not interested in anything for the children particularly; they were interested in somebody next door who was in bad shape. And here were two little boys who were round-faced and very happy and cheerful. They came in and sat down quietly and listened very alertly. One was 6 and the other was 8. The mother told them, "You can go outside and play if you want to."

And they said, "No, we would rather sit here," and they sat there. Those children certainly were calm! It was so unusual to have children sitting with no noise and so forth that it startled me!

Finally, experimentally, I shoved over a gadget I thought they might be interested in—a ship's telescope—thinking it would be pulled to pieces in the next five minutes. They immediately found out how to focus it and a few minutes later were over at the window looking out and examining the neighborhood, using it the way it was supposed to be used and not beating each other over the head with it. This fascinated me. So I said to this lady, "How do you and your husband get along?"

And she said, "Why, what do you mean? We get along all right."

I said, "What church do you belong to?"

"What church? We don't belong to any church."

"Well, what kind of a person is your husband?"

"Oh, he's a swell guy."

“What does he do?”

“He does pretty well.” It turned out that her husband was in shipping. He wasn’t doing anything really to be super proud of, but according to this woman he was about the biggest shipping man that ever got to ship anything!

I got even more curious about this, and I met the husband a day or so later and I said, “Say, what do you think about your wife? What kind of a wife do you have?”

He looked at me with great surprise and said, “About the finest woman alive. You’re not going to say anything against her, are you?”

“No. Do you get along well with her?”

“Oh, sure. You know,” he said, “I never really amounted to anything until I got married, and now things are very nice.”

I said, “What happens at night when you come home?”

“Oh, I don’t know. I eat supper, and play cards with the wife and kids, and maybe go for a drive or something like that.”

And I said, “Well, where are the children’s grandparents?”

“Oh, they are all dead.”

Here were two very bright, alert, calm little children. They never got into trouble in the neighborhood with their fellow man. But you would very occasionally find them on a highly punitive expedition—the two of them—to sort out this bully who had assaulted somebody younger than himself. Knights errant! They were very serious about the whole thing too. They beat up a child who was about 10 years old, and this was something that should not have happened according to the 10-year-old’s parents. I heard that they came over and evidently got very short shrift about the whole matter. So these children were not only being backed up in the house but were being backed up outside of the house. Nobody questioned their reasoning, so they had no reason to question their own reasoning, and life was very beautiful all the way along the line.

This does not mean that these children are going to be dumb vegetables. It means probably that they will be very sane citizens and actually amount to something very fine in life. I give you this as a model of what happens. I have seen enough now of life up against Dianetics, as well as Dianetics infiltrating the social order of today, to know that treating children is not any easy task, because it is very hard to treat children without occasionally having to educate the parents. And I know that the parents are very often going to balk you in educating children along certain lines.

But if you can give a child a good release, if you can straighten him out in his early years, you have done a very great deal for him; because these are the years in which he learns things, and you have made it possible for him to fill his standard banks and to be able to think straight, early enough, so that he has an enormous advantage in life.

Wherever you can practice Dianetics on children, by all means do so. If you cannot practice directly on children, spread the word around on the subject of Preventive Dianetics, and whether we process all the people in the United States or not, we may have a sane society in the next generation or two.