

I. Fictional orphans

I. Orphan myth [Annie]: What they need is love and indulgence.

I. "Once she realizes how much you love her, that will all change." ["Love is all you need"? Beatles were wrong]

II. Evangelical version:

I. Because we are called to do this, it will all be fine ["We prayed over it in Jesus' name."]

II. Love and discipline [corporal discipline] will cure it.

III. Complication: Infertility: "Once a child comes, all will be well" [The child is expected to be their savior; in the process, the child becomes their idol. No child can bear the weight of godhood.] [Do you think you're dying to have a child now? You will die more before it's over.]

II. Felix culpa: three children [RAD: 6, 7, 8] [Now: 20, 14, 10] [on journey]

II. Significant challenge especially when adopting older children: attachment [the capacity to bond and to develop meaningful relationships, particularly with primary caregivers] [result of neglect or abuse] [38% of children in foster care]

I. Prior to DSM5: reactive attachment disorder, two very different subtypes, similar cause but very different phenomena:

I. Inhibited: does not seek caregiver when distressed, responds with fear or uncertainty: tends to fade in stable environment.

II. Disinhibited: no natural wariness of strangers [climb into stranger's lap, stroke face] shallow social/peer relations: [seems like "perfect child" when you meet them: normal child doesn't cuddle into a stranger's lap when you first meet them] Now: Disinhibited Social Engagement Disorder, comorbidity with ADHD

I. A pattern of behavior in which a child actively approaches and interacts with unfamiliar adults and exhibits at least

two of the following: Reduced or absent reticence in approaching and interacting with unfamiliar adults. Overly familiar verbal or physical behavior (that is not consistent with culturally sanctioned and with age-appropriate social boundaries). Diminished or absent checking back with adult caregiver after venturing away, even in unfamiliar settings. Willingness to go off with an unfamiliar adult with little or no hesitation. The behaviors ... are not limited to impulsivity (as in Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder) but include socially disinhibited behavior.

- II. What's missing: extreme manipulative behaviors, behaviors intended to shock, destructive behaviors toward persons or pets or property, lack of bonding, blank effect, unnaturally high pain tolerance, pain or injury is funny
[**CORPORAL DISCIPLINE**]
- III. Physiological aspects [not a mere behavioral issue! you are not merely changing behaviors; you are retraining a brain to function in a new way; love alone isn't enough]
 - I. Hypercortisolism: in many attachment-disordered children: elevated cortisol + under-developed HPA Axis: cortisol [stress hormone] overproduced and under-regulated.
 - I. One possibility: equilibrated at a hypercortisolic state: seek to increase stress in environment because that feels normal [want and need stability: body feels unnatural in calmness and stability]
 - II. ["Whenever you made me calm, I always felt like I was falling."]
 - II. Underdeveloped capacity to coordinate different parts of the brain [crawling, mimicking facial expressions = self-soothe, self-organize, think about what they are feeling and why {facial expressions of feelings}] [Struggle to "connect files": emotion and word, object and word {fear}]

IV. What is goal?

- I. Not: "normal," "successful," "happy" child: If normal, successful, and happy are your goals, you don't need children at all, biological or adopted.
- II. God to be glorified and grace to be displayed through this child's life.
 - I. Sometimes, the best you can do: move the child a little closer to God's good design for how people grow, one step closer toward a healing that won't happen in this life at all: relational brokenness in my oldest daughter that will be lifelong: progress is the most that I hope for in this life.
 - II. Question is not: "What can we do to make this child act normal?" It is: "God, what are you teaching us? How does this point us to your grace and your glory? How can we help this child's healing?"

Discipline of the child

- 1. Develop habits of honesty [deception as default, changes in consequences, "If you talk to me and tell me the truth, we can work through anything."]
- 2. Determine what could have been done differently [whiteboard, building the capacity to reflect on actions and to see alternatives]

Discipline of yourself

- 3. Never be shocked [shock and disorder brings them to level that feels natural--but it undercuts everything their souls need, "I hate you," don't raise your voice]
- 4. Never be divided or triangulated: being allowed to divide husband and wife [child has attached to one person at a time, does not know how to deal with dyad] [No open-ended negotiation!] [grandparents]

Daily habits

- 5. Show and share the schedule [the disordered aspect thrives on chaos, need to know there is order] [rituals, liturgy]

6. Value physical expressions of affection: Healthy physical contact was much of what they missed in first few years [Rebirthing, holding = harmful, but there are some good aspects]: may try to use physical contact in manipulative ways [not hugging you]—they want you to be lovingly in charge; their attempts to be in charge in your place are trying to find out if they are in a secure environment or not, if you let go of your parental role, momentary satisfaction but terror at knowing I'm the one in charge, I'm on my own in this ... Feeding her, sitting across the table eye-to-eye ... Deep, consistent physical affection.
7. Limit physical expressions of affection: physical contact with everyone:
8. Limit or eliminate entertainment in isolation [they have learned to function independently at an unnatural age, entertainment in isolation is a retreat into this lostness], debrief entertainment in community.
9. Play with them and ask about feelings.
10. In their presence, speak to them not about them.

V. Place of the church in adoption

1. Before adoption: Stop the narrative of short-term rescuers, launch a narrative of long-term partnership and transformation.
2. After adoption: if you're not willing to find a way to partner with organizations to provide counseling throughout first 24 months, stop acting like you are caring for orphans.
3. After adoption: grace and guidance if it falls apart [sometimes a home that you thought was permanent ends up being transitional, failure? Yes: but there is grace and a need for guidance]

Trust my Father's hand / "uncomfortable around that person" / I didn't exist before I was three / for years, when we've had an episode of lying or stealing, she has come to us / "Daddy, I felt like laughing—I hate that" [End of day with same number of children: "Yeah, us."