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## **SPIRITED AWAY**

**Where have all the children gone?**

**And who's to pay the Piper?**

**Clif Sanderson**

Once upon a time, in the little North Western German town of Hamelin there was a plague of rats. There were black rats, brown rats, grey rats; rats with long pink tails – rats with long, sharp, yellow teeth. Rats in the food cupboards, rats under the chairs, rats in the walls scratching and munching. There were rats in the children's bedrooms and in the babies' cribs. No one could sleep for the noise of squealing and squeaking. In the dark of night rodent eyes glistened in all the damp alleys of the village. Fear gripped the townspeople. The village's burgomasters were simply unable to solve the problem.

Then at the height of the trouble, a stranger dressed in odd clothes appeared with an offer to rid the town of rats. Everyone pleaded with him to help, and they agreed that, even though he was asking for half of the town's yearly income, they would pay anything to see the end of the rats.

And so he took out his flute and began playing. The rats came running from under the trash bins, running over the cobble streets, leaping out of first floor windows - all intent on following the man with the music. Truly, it was not long before there were no rats in all of Hamelin.

The clever businessmen of the town council decided that, as there were no rats in the town, they had no need to pay the Piper. Whereupon, with a bitter smile, he began to play again and from out of the bedrooms, and across the cobble streets and from their cribs, ran and crawled all the children of the town. They danced and sang, blinded by the magical music as they followed the Pied Piper deep into the dark cave of a nearby mountain.

The people were never to see them again.



But now, many centuries later, the rats have returned to the towns and cities of the modern world.

This time the Piper is playing an entirely different tune. He knows that the rats have already taken over the minds and lives of the population. He only needs wait, ready to pounce. The Piper's flute is now replaced by the bright, single eye of the plasma screen. This new insidious pandemic has mesmerised adults and children alike.

Paralyzed, most parents are deeply conditioned and without complaint quietly doze off, leaving their innocent children to be bombarded with ugly, aggressive images, right in their own bedrooms. By the age of seven children will have lost 4,500 hours of sleep when even the loss of one hour's needed sleep affects their mental performance.

The modern Piper, our new antagonist, no longer dressed in patchwork, threadbare rags, wears designer clothes, and offers temptations of happiness and unending wealth.

His modern sidekicks know exactly how to neutralise any resistance by playing on the pipes of fear. Their instruments are the tools of propaganda, a lethal mix of truth and fantasy. They are delivered with the precise skill of the most delicate surgeon.

Headlines scream: -

- Millions will die from Bird Flu. (Have you counted the actual fatalities?)
- African ('killer') bees will wipe out the population. (Checking the Internet we find that the sting of the 'killer' bee is no worse than an ordinary one.)
- Perfectly normal water suddenly becomes a potential explosive if carried in your handbag on your friendly airline.

Perhaps it might serve us well to recall that old fable, the Boy Who Cried Wolf. Constant repetition of imagined terrors quickly brings us to the point where we are desensitized to the real threats.

Do we become outraged when we read that 11.2% of girls in some countries have been cutting or burning themselves or taking poisons? It doesn't look like we do.

If 9.6% (nearly one in ten) children in the U.K. have psychological problems, do you think the Piper's bill should be paid sooner - or later?

Boys in the USA are four times more likely than girls to have conduct disorder.

This article is not the place to detail all the horrors of childhood in the world. Even if we do not have children ourselves, according to quantum physics, each of us is infinitely interconnected. This means that the future is, and always has been, dependent on the present. Now that this has become even more clear, we have no choice but to accept our infinite role as caretakers of the future, each of us intertwined and as co-dependent as each particle of existence.

If this revelation means we do act now, we will see such a deep all-embracing philosophical, psychological and physiological upheaval that God must truly begin smiling!

From that higher state we could take in, and make use of, apparently disastrous information without collapsing into ineffective disarray. Crossing the raging torrent is possible by linking arms and bending towards safety for all. Clearly it is not only today's parents who must acknowledge their part in preserving our world but each generation carries equal responsibility. Only by grasping that unity can we have the collective strength to face up to the truth of the deteriorating social, economic and personal ethics of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Or does the contemplation of such an apparently enormous burden make us fearful? Truly, are we sufficiently incensed to jump to our feet and, all together, shout, 'I have had enough'?

If we are moved to do this for ourselves, what of the children? Are they not the ultimate victims? They were born with unconditional hope and expectations of joy. Have we not forsaken them to the Piper's enchantment?

Perhaps you are already under the spell of the insidious music. Perhaps it seems too difficult to contemplate taking part in such a change. Well, there is only one way to find out. Start by asking your friends, your family, perhaps calling the local kindergarten and asking, 'what exactly is happening to the children you know?'

I did. In the city of Karlsruhe, Germany, the local teacher of first grade children told us that out of 22 children in her class, 15 were on medically prescribed drugs for disruptive behaviour and for a panoply of other symptoms. Read that to me again: 15 out of 22 kids not long out of diapers.

Looking deeper into the causes you find there is no agreed, all-encompassing reason.

We can find the research of American psychologist, biologist and broadcaster, Aric Sigman (2000), who points out that watching television slows the metabolic rate, stunts children's brains and increases ADHD. Let alone the negative influences of the ugly, aggressive, violent images they are bombarded with.

The culprit may be largely the constant viewing of television. (Untold numbers of children have television sets and computers in their bedrooms.)

Or could it be that the unprecedented numbers of badly affected children are disturbed because they have bad diets, lack of quality parenting, lack of body touching or little physical movement from constantly staring at TV, video games and computers?

We urgently need to widen investigation into both the causes and the remedies of children's problems. In his new book, 'The Caesarean', French obstetrician and gynecologist Dr Michael Odent, suggests that induced births deprive the child of oxytocin – the natural 'love' hormone that is stimulated by labor.

How have we become a society that demands birth to a convenient timetable for doctor and mother? We have no patience for allowing a longer process to unfold, conditioned as we are to shorter and shorter mental focus by programs that compete for our attention, with brief segments punctuated with violence and sex; and to having our entertainment served up on regular timetables.

I am neither a medical doctor (my own doctorate is in Natural Medicine from the Open International University, which is seldom recognized by the academic institutions), nor am I a social worker, a midwife, a trained nurse or an ordained cleric. That makes me a fairly average person, I guess.

What was given to me by my mother at birth, to which Polynesian friends and teachers have added, was the gift of healing. It was because of that ability that I was invited to work for more than five years within the most affected areas of Russia and Belarus following the Chernobyl disaster. It began for me in the Central Children's Haematological hospital in Minsk. The head doctor, Olga Aleinikova, was convinced that the dramatic increase in cases of children's cancer she was seeing were a direct result of Chernobyl's radiation. She found that, despite many medical groups coming from many countries to offer help, there was no significant change in the 12-15 deaths each week. She did not need complicated research to observe that her hospital was rapidly running out of beds because my work had changed that number of 12-15 down to an average of 2-3 deaths per week. It was also abundantly clear that children were showing improvement in most aspects of their illnesses. And for me, perhaps the most difficult thing was that each time my visa ran out, worried mothers would

physically hold my clothes, pleading with me to stay as they had seen the benefit to their children's health and saw no other sign of help.

I took part in several research projects (Sanderson 1991; 1993; Virato, 1992), such that the Russian Ministry of Health awarded me an acknowledgment for 'Service to Medical Science.' But that was just incidental to the confrontation with such a massive problem. I recall how heart-wrenching it was to walk the wards which held so much suffering. One of the described effects of exposure to low-level radiation appears to be a sudden explosive nosebleed. In any class in the boarding school I once worked in, almost all t-shirts and many schoolbooks were blood spattered. Many of the kids had 24-hour headaches to rival the worst migraine. Doctors who worked alongside me agreed that, after a week of my interventions there were no further headaches of such sorts reported.

Professor Larissa Evetts of Grodno (Southern Belarus) led a team of research doctors who measured 69 parameters of health as my work progressed. Forgive me, I am not a medical researcher and so I can only repeat what she said as the outcome of the work. The most noticeable thing was the significant reduction of radiation in the children's urine. Apparently something previously considered impossible. Of the 132 children in the project, significant numbers showed improvement in a number of conditions.

But I retreat to the standpoint of Integrated Medicine. My statement is that if any change has ever happened to anyone at any time in any way it must fit into Nature's lore. It only makes common sense that each and every person is 'significantly' different one to the other. Taking averages, researching large numbers or describing results as the norm has created a culture of, well, dare I use the appellation, 'zombies'! On both sides of the divide! Therefore when I want to discuss examples, based in the realms of probability, they are observations by 'normal' people in the physical world.

One of my favorite examples has been the case of Vasja. Eight years old, effectively an orphan (both parents alcoholic and an aged grandmother totally devoid of loving-kindness), he was incontinent and apparently psychologically disturbed. His cleft pallet added to his disconnection from his peer group and, of course unable to fend for himself. There arose an opportunity for me to work daily with him over one month. Yet, after only the first three days he became continent, actually changed his own clothes, began joining in the games of the other children and even, I swear, offered to take a shower un-coerced.

Vasja was the only child we felt could be helped by a period in a foreign country. (I became totally opposed to the misunderstandings of kind-thinking people who took kids from their native surroundings and language, showed them the outside world and then threw them back into their village life with limited diet, estrangement from their peers and almost certain damage to their fragile immune systems through sudden climate changes).

Well, Vasja traveled to Scotland where he was able to have his cleft pallet corrected, was adopted by a good family and has become an inspired artist.

All of this led me to evolve what appears to be a proven, yet simple method which is profoundly effective. Indeed it was the only possible way to cope with that grinding horror – doctors telling of babies being born without bones, with one eye, distortions and mutations which would halt description - was what I have called Deep Field Relaxation. It can be taught (no one is more special than anyone else) and can be incorporated into the practices already in use by therapists, doctors and lay people in a dozen countries.

The quintessence of DFR is the creation of silence and caring contact through joyful hugging which, through loss of ego-driven purpose, connects us to the Information Field of Creativity (a God if you like).

In the 'real' world I returned to, we have, so far, been lucky to not have another fearful 'Chernobyl'. What, therefore, could my experience be useful for? I admit it took me far too many years to grasp that what I had been through had now paled into insignificance when compared to what any thinking person can be observed in today's world - the disregard for our collective future. On the personal level, there is drug abuse, uncontrolled violence, sexual aberration, obesity, negative, hostile and defiant behaviour, hyperactivity, girls taught to hate their bodies, depression, a loss of contact with reality...the list goes on and on..... On the collective level, there is pollution of the environment, disregard for limited resources of land, water and living creatures, and global warming.

The children of Chernobyl had given me the memories, the dedication and the way to be of service beyond any personal goal. And, at the risk of cliché, I can state that we are all fully aware that 'children are the future'.

To meet these challenges I tentatively offered DFR to a group of children (and their parents of course) and the immediate response was overwhelming. This was the substance of the establishment of a new movement called The SonntagsKinder Club, which, in its first stages focuses on any child between the ages of 0 and 11 years, with the possibility of developing further approaches for teenagers. (It certainly began with the children, however in almost every group parents are quick to ask for a time when moms and dads might have their own time to come and experience hugging each other in silence).

SonntagsKinder, the name, comes from the observation in many cultures that there are some children who are naturally happy, naturally 'lucky'. They are referred to as Sunday's Children (not to be confused with the Sunday School of religions). Traditionally, Sunday morning was always a family time and this is the basis for our meetings.

The whole concept is based on the apparently simple dictum that we cannot possibly know all the causes of the behavioural and learning problems these families are experiencing. The resolutions to these problems lie in non-action, non-doing, non-directive practices.

Living beings have wandered the planet for zillions of years. What made that possible? Just the most powerful force in the universe - the desire for life to continue. Doesn't it make sense then, to turn to nature and allow Her wishes be made available through pure love and joy?

Knowing that children are open to changes, we can bring into their lives a moment of silence. By bringing together a child with his or her parents in a group of parents sitting quietly, hugging their own child, I have seen what can only be described as miracles.

A child from Brazil, sold at birth by his grandmother, had never allowed love into his 7-year-old life. At the SonntagsKinder Club meeting he sat on the floor until halfway through, then for the first time climbed into his mom's lap and hugged her. Tears all around.

A 6-year-old boy was banned from going to kindergarten because of aggressive and violent behaviour. After two SKC sessions there was a dramatic change and he was allowed to join again.

One mentally retarded girl, 8-years-old, expressed enormous happiness, showing emotions she had never shown before.

Teresa had tremendous difficulties in school and was unable to move up in grades. After one month of SKC she made such a leap that she was promoted a full year.



*SonntagsKinder Club*

Without doubt, it takes courage to cast aside many of the concepts of established science and medicine, especially because some of those concepts appear to be beneficial. The new science of quantum physics teaches us that there is no separation of one from the other. DFR turns theory into practice.

We have shown that during a SonntagsKinder meeting, the greatest benefit is to avoid any form of teaching. There is no conversation around perceived problems. No one needs speak without their choosing.

[The greatest gift you can give a child is a moment of deep Silence.](#)

This is a special event and the kids are invited to be dressed in their best clothes; the child sits on their father's or mother's lap (if they are comfortable). That itself makes them special. Mom (or dad - yes, many dads love this chance to re-establish bonding) holds her child and closes her eyes. The kids LOVE that. We listen to a specially created CD, and one of the leaders quietly moves from parent to parent, placing a hand on their back and on the shoulder of the child. It is an expression of connection (which the kids really understand) and we hold this circle for 20, perhaps 30 minutes.

It is perfectly safe for the kids as the parent is always present with their child. If there are more than two children in one family, they come for separate sessions. Each child MUST have the experience of being special.

Since kids love to hold memories, and to underline the experience, we have created a wonderful coloring book with inspiring images of joy, love and connection with children of other cultures. Illustrated by Stefan Stutz, the book has a touch of humor which makes many adults want a copy for themselves! I guarantee that you could not glance through our book without a deep smile of happiness.

We encourage older people to take part in the volunteering group, greeting moms, dads and the kids, settling the sitters and providing the presence of representatives of all generations.

Why not visit our web page to see more about the SonntagsKinder Club, how to become a leader of SKC, and see some of the drawings in *'My Big Hugging Family'* book? (See details below.)

As I said, in the end it is a very simple approach, which shows great promise As the movement grows and in the countries already involved, there will be more and more trainings for people to become leaders and hosts.

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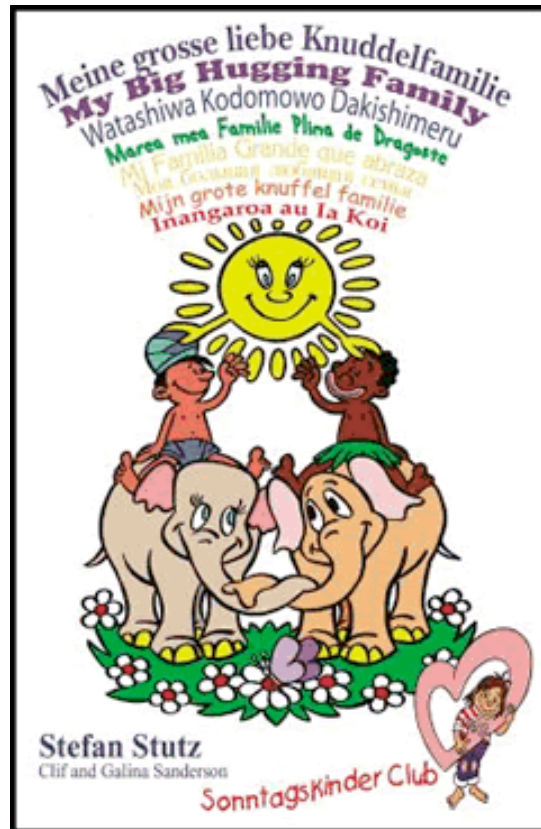
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Clif Sanderson, a New Zealander, is a storyteller, an accomplished writer and a traveller who has been a healer for more than 30 years, working in more than 20 countries. He has spoken to a special group at the United Nations in New York of his work of integrated medicine, and in universities in USA, U.K., Australia, Russia and other countries. He is a full member of the Scientific and Medical Network (UK), a co-founder of the registered children's charity, 'FOCUS', in the USA, and the creator of the Deep Field Relaxation (DFR) method. He teaches doctors and lay people how to become comfortable with the notion that 'We Don't Know'.

Visit [www.intention-in-action.com](http://www.intention-in-action.com) for a comprehensive overview of DFR and a brief look at his best-selling book, '**Knowing Nothing, Living Happy** – an extraordinary journey through Time and Space to freedom'. Available directly or through Amazon.com.

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