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PresentChild: The Child as a Perfect Remedy for the Parent

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Abstract

Children are the ultimate remedy for their parents and the cured parents become the perfect remedy for their children. This article discusses how mirroring principles can be used in the treatment of children by considering their signs and symptoms as an expression of the source of healing they are for their parent(s). Helping parents to become aware of these healing messages from their children, and helping them to translate the messages and respond to them, promotes thriving in their children because the parents themselves are thriving.

Keywords: PresentChild[®], children, parents, mirroring, self-consciousness, healing, relations, family

Introduction

I have practiced classical homeopathy since 1990. In my practice I see a lot of parents seeking homeopathic treatment for their children, who are suffering from a broad variety of problems. These include for example restless or angry behaviours, inflammations, allergies and bedwetting. In the past I prescribed homeopathic remedies, which were very helpful for these children, but only relieved their problems for a while. I knew theoretically that a long-lasting solution should be possible with homeopathy, but in children I found that the cure was more temporarily. After discovering and applying the PresentChild[®] method in these kinds of situations, the cures of children became long-lasting, often even without having to prescribe homeopathic remedies.

Without my knowledge of homeopathy, I might never have discovered the amazingly simple and effective PresentChild[®] Method. The ultimate principle of homeopathy is that 'like cures like.' That is, in order to establish a long-lasting cure in a patient, a remedy is needed which produces symptoms similar to those of the complaint. That is, in order to establish a long-lasting cure we need a 'simillimum' – a remedy which produces the set of symptoms similar to those which the complaint itself produces. The more congruent this match is, the more effective the remedy will be in curing the patient. Sleeplessness, for example, can be cured by the homeopathic remedy Coffea or when a person is burned, the application of lukewarm water on the burn will be helpful. This is how homeopathy works: like cures like. The remedy very mildly aggravates the situation, the reaction of

the organism subsequently is to stop the influence of the remedy, curing also the similar problems that were there in the first place.

In my consultations it is my aim to be homeopathic rather than to just prescribe homeopathic remedies. It is about realizing that symptoms and diseases, and anything else one struggles with, are there to heal and help people, showing what is the matter inside them.

This is also true when problems occur with your child. At first sight, the child seems ill or appears to be behaving badly. On a more subtle level, the child is actually reacting perfectly to a subconscious issue in one or both parents or in the (family) situation. The child's behaviours are just like a sign on the car dashboard indicating that something is wrong, or an apple reflecting how the tree is doing. So the child is an indicator of the family situation and - being very similar to the parents - a cure at the same time. If I can persuade the parents to take in the 'child remedy', the whole family will benefit and the child will be cured. When the car problem is dealt with, the indicator switches off until the problem arises again.

My son as my remedy

Nothing in the world is more similar than parents and children, and that is why they heal each other. So, basically, in my work I have only two – but very successful – remedies: the child and the parent. At the same time, I have thousands and thousands of remedies available, as each human being is different. My advantage is that I don't have to study hard which remedy to prescribe, because the problem and the remedy come to my office together, just like rain and clouds appear together. My only task is to persuade the parent to 'take the remedy' – to accept their child's healing message that is being given to them.

Engaging in this process, my work as a therapist has become easier and more joyful. I am delighted to share this with you. Although I write this article from a therapist point of view, any dedicated parent can pick up my book and learn about the method. You can use a problem of your child for the benefit of yourself and your child.

How did I come to this discovery? As happens so often, my insights originate at home in my own life. Twenty years ago I was an isolated and depressed woman. It was difficult for me to make contact with other people. I was autistic in a way, sitting 'on my lonely island' with a whole lot of thinking, with very high ideals about how life and the world should be. I wanted to change the world in which I was living, resonating especially with environmental issues. My own needs, longings and feelings, looking after myself, listening to my body - those were the bottom lines on my agenda.

As for children, I didn't want to give birth to them in this dark, dirty and violent world because I considered it an awful place for a child to be in. But despite all my reservations and hesitations it happened. I had two children, my first being born twenty-two years ago. And, to my surprise, it didn't seem so bad.

I had difficulties becoming a real mom, but with the help of books I could do whatever was necessary for a child. However, by the time my son was four years old I doubted whether I was doing the right thing. He was not like a child at all, more like an old man. He did not play well, neither on his own nor with other children; he was focussed on adults and adult activities like reading, writing and thinking. Beside all that, he had a chronic cold, a chronic state of catarrh. His nose, and in fact his whole head, was full of mucus. He wasn't very ill but certainly not healthy either.

As a whole, he didn't look happy to me, but I thought maybe that is his character, just the way he is. All day long he would follow me, saying: "Mommy, mom, mommy" in a moaning kind of way. Of course I looked for different kinds of therapeutic help, in addition to classical homeopathy, but nothing helped us.

One day I decided to write down his life story, everything that happened from conception to the present day. When I was finished, I read back what I had written and it struck me like thunder! It was all about me! My inner child was gone; I was the old person. I didn't like to play: not in my life, not in my work, not with my son. It was I who was completely focussed on adults and adult activities like reading and writing and thinking. I considered myself a walking head in those days, with no feelings and not in touch with my body. I thought that was my character, the way I was built.

For the first time in my life I asked myself whether maybe this wasn't my true character but rather that it was me being unhappy. I had become chronically 'cold.' resembling the colds my son suffered from. Just like my son's head was literally filled with rubbish, mine was metaphorically filled with rubbish that I needed to get rid of. And in a similar way to my son, I wasn't ill but certainly not 'healthy' either, in every possible sense. For the first time in my life I knew that this is not who I really am, but this is how I had become: detached, cold and rational. Now I was ever so grateful to my son, who never gave up trying to catch my attention with his "Mommy, mom, mommy ..."

This was a huge wake-up call for me. How could I expect my son to become more playful and happy if I wasn't? I am his role model, his example in life. That very day I decided to become playful, warm and full of attention, wanting to be a better parent for him... but it was very healing for me at the same time!

I remember that I wondered how I could become warm, attentive and playful if I thought I had no feelings? My son brought me the solution: He thought of a game called 'secret cave,' a place where everything is possible, just by imagining it. He asked me over and over again what was in my secret cave, and it worked! I discovered I did have feelings, and became warm and playful.

The 'new' mother that I was made her son happy, made him a child again, and confirming my theory, it also made his catarrh disappear within a few days, never to come back. I was stunned but also felt guilty. I realized he had been suffering because of me. Later on, I realized that I could not be guilty of something of which I had been unconscious.

Unlike his previous behaviour, my son started asking if he could play with his friends, and because of that I had time on my own. When I used it for my new interests and activities, he stayed away all afternoon, but when I fell back into old behaviour, he would regularly return within a few minutes. He did this over and over again. That is how I came to realize that we are deeply connected. In effect, he told me, "There's no way back, Mom. You have to go all the way! And you have to do it for yourself, not just for me" And this path, of course, is the never-ending story of one's life; the higher purpose that the founding father of homeopathy, Samuel Hahnemann referred to. It brought me healing, self-consciousness, feeling connected and having a new purpose in life.

I was amazed that my son was such a perfect homeopath! His diagnosis for me was so accurate! But he was also my perfect remedy because he put the truth about myself right in front of me. This truth revealed unconscious elements within me that were the reason why I had failed to be effective in life and parenthood. When I discovered that, it motivated me deeply to waken these elements within myself. Why? Because I love my son and saw his deep and unconditional love for me. He gave himself for me. I would do anything to pay him back! This is another important feature of the PresentChild[®] Method, because don't we all know how important it is to have a patient who is motivated?

My son didn't give me a single dose of his remedy. It looked more like continious treatment, with a daily update. Whenever needed, he would give me another dose or even another remedy, by having a minor regression or raising a new issue or theme. Every day he would find new ways of showing me what was needed in my life at that very moment, adapting his interventions all the time, carefully tracking and boosting my progress.

For example, I remember at one point he developed an interest in archaeology and dinosaurs. When I got the hint that I had to go back into my past, find out what happened and start to investigate, he lost his interest in these and moved on to other things. That is how he made me the mother he needed for his own life.

Turning my experiences into a method

After a while, of course I had to explore this in my practice with other parents. I remember one of my first patients, 'Sarah' a five year-old girl with sudden attacks of high fever. No inflammations were found to explain the fevers. The only findings were recurring fevers and some mucus in her nose.

Sarah also had nightmares about witches that woke her up. Her mother then had to come and chase them away. I was happy with the symptom of a full nose, as was familiar to me from the situation with my son. So I asked this mother, "What about your life? Is it full, filled up?" "O, my goodness yes," she said and listed a lot of things that she did to be a good mother. "It's like a fever, the way I do these things." There was the fever, identified spontaneously by her own words!

I suggested that her daughter might want to communicate, with her nightmares about witches, that it is mothers' own worst nightmare to be 'a bad witch' instead of a good mother. That she should chase away this idea just like she chased away the witches from the daughter's dreams. I said to this mother, "It is as though she is telling you that you are good enough already, and to just spend your time with her." This mother decided to start right away, re-ordering her priorities and cancelling some of her activities. The next day, her daughter was well and the fevers disappeared for good, along with the nightmares. Years later, I read a newspaper report about scientific research from Massachusetts, saying that fevers occur more often in children because of parents' stress (Wyman, et al. 2007)

I was amazed and could not let go of this line of investigation. After my beginner's luck with an easy, rapidly resolving case, years of hard work followed. I didn't want it to be intuitive guesses; I wanted to work methodically and demonstrate success with this approach. Today, about 150 homeopaths and other therapists in The Netherlands and Belgium have learned to accurately 'translate' the child's behaviour and complaints as healing messages for their parents' lives. Their therapeutic approach is called the 'PresentChild^{®'} method. In English these practitioners are called PresentChild Translators, translating the present state the child is in into a gift for the parent (Venema, web reference; Venema, 2008; 2012). Of course, these messages often do not come in words but are expressed in play, behaviour, body language, development, physical complaints and other creative ways.

I continued to find it most helpful comparing families to apple trees. If the apples on the tree don't flourish, nobody would even consider curing the apples one by one. It is much more logical to help the tree. By doing so, we will help every apple on that tree. If we consider families, it is similarly logical to help the parents when something is the matter with the children. Through observing the apples (children), we can draw conclusions about the state of the tree (parents).

In homeopathy we think in terms of 'miasms.' These signify the unconscious hereditary influence that parents pass on to their children. They show whatever is hidden in the parent. The difference between apples and people of course is that apples hang from the tree with a little branch. With people one cannot see this branch, this connection, but it is still there. In humans there is a strong soul/ DNA/ nurture-connection. Einstein noted, "The illusion of being divided from each other is an optical failure of our consciousness."

A child is not yet full-grown; she or he depends on our care and love and resonates with the wellbeing of the parents (just like an apple on the tree). Young children are dependent on their parents to make the right choices in life. With adult children the connection with the parents remains, but the children are now responsible for their own choices in life.

The PresentChild[®] Method in action

So how does this method work? In a homeopathic consultation I start with the 'anamnesis,' a very thorough history of physical conditions, plus social and psychological issues. The parents talk about the complaints and behaviours of their children. I write it all down, almost verbatim. Every detail is recorded, including especially all the strange, rare and peculiar symptoms I've learned to value as a homeopath. The exact words and sentences used are very important. The method works with exact language.

For example, a mother tells me that her son interrupts the family conversations. He doesn't have a clue when it is appropriate to interrupt. Out of the blue he asks, "Mom, do you remember, at such and such time, there was this man that drove away in this car?"

This appeared to be a random example, which might have been something unrelated to the primary problems we were exploring. But when I repeated these words to his mother, she burst into tears. "Oh my God, that is my father! Early in my life, he went to a sanatorium and died. I only remember the picture of him stepping into the car and leaving. After that we never spoke of him any more, I started to take care of my mother, hiding my own grief."

After realizing the impact of this occurrence, releasing her emotions, grieving about her father's death and the consequences of it for her own life, her son stopped interrupting conversations. The story that he wanted to tell, was heard and accepted. The need to continue his behaviour was then gone.

When the parent's story about the child is complete, I make an appropriate 'translation' that suggests the relevance to the life of the parent. There are several steps to accomplish a suitable translation, but the two most important steps are:

a. The child's name is replaced by that of the parent. Then you get a story in which some information fits right away for the parent, and other parts make no sense at all.

b. These 'making no sense at all' parts have to be transformed from a literal to a metaphorical meaning. This is important.

This creates the conditions through which the parents can take in the 'the remedy' and it will resonate within them. Now the story unfolds another layer of meaning with (almost) the same words.

"Peter doesn't like to swim" becomes "Mother doesn't like to 'swim." The underlying meaning is that she is unsure, not in control, fears drowning (for instance, in emotions or in an uncertainty).

By reflecting back the words in this way, it touches the parent's heart at a very deep level, one that the parent did not recognize or could not reach. To the parent it is as if the child is talking to him or her, telling a story that is true, revealing unconscious issues (often from the parents' early childhood) and healing at the same time because it reveals a complete and true picture of their life. The story reveals the condition of the parent's inner child and how the adult person relates to her or his inner child. When the parent restores a good relationship with these forgotten or rejected parts within, s/he automatically learns to give his/her real child(ren) what is necessary for their welfare in the present day situation. And what is cured inside the parent will have its results in everything s/he undertakes, whether it is parenthood, her/his own life, the partner relationship, work or friendships. So at first it might look like a detour when we focus on the cure of a child like this, but in fact it is a shortcut. One child can cure a whole family!

Parents' reports

Case 1: Jean, about her daughter, Emma-Rose

When Emma-Rose was 16 she decided to do an audition for a Dance Intensive in America. I supported her but immediately made a backup plan should disaster strike. Shocked by my gloomy approach, I decided to practice wishing without restraint. I put all negative thoughts out of my mind and concentrated on a positive outcome. She was accepted and set about preparing for the trip.

Then *disaster struck*; she contracted infectious mononucleosis. *Swallowing became unbearably painful, she was exhausted and her head ached.* She resisted giving in to the illness but eventually accepted that rest was essential. She *was forced to lay down her head.* I saw her dream disappearing under a veil one I knew all too well! A veil that prevented anyone from discovering that there had been some *mistake* and that her success was too good to have been true after all.

A PresentChild consultation revealed the following questions: What was I infected with? What could I no longer swallow? Why was I so afraid to lay my head down to rest? I was living under a veil of belief that achievement and success did not 'just happen,' especially not to me. I came to see that the veil, whilst smothering any ambition I had, also protected me from having to stick my neck out, take risks and accept responsibility. The veil was my protection; her illness was hers. She had pushed herself too far with the audition, school exams and a job.

A consultation with a homeopath revealed that she felt that her classmates begrudged her any success and were *secretly glad she may fail to achieve her dream*. He then pertinently asked her whether she believed in herself, took joy in her own success?

Did I allow myself any fair chance of success? Despite my dreams and being told I could do anything I wanted to, I also heard that *secretly* I was expected to become no more than 'just' a housewife and

mother. I was a disappointment from the start, doomed to fail. Infectious mono is a virus that can attack deep in the body-cells. I was infected deeply with a belief that I would not amount to much; I felt the dis-ease this caused me deeply. I would *not swallow* this misconception any more. I could now rest my head weary from trying not to miss any clues as to achieve *what others expected of me*.

Unbelievably, Emma recovered faster than expected and set off for America. She went from one hour fitness training to nine hours of intensive dancing per day. She put everything she had into being selected for the 'A' group and proving to the teachers that she deserved her place, pushing herself beyond her physical limits doing so. She eventually collapsed in tears, exhausted and in pain. Her ability to stay hung in the balance.

I felt devastated for her! I wrote her story down to translate using the PresentChild[®] Method. She felt inferior to the other students and had the need to *justify her place* at the dance school. Even though the standard was in some ways higher than she was used to, she managed *by accident* to keep up but the strain of preventing her shortcomings from being discovered told on her. The shame of being discovered lacking was worst of all. It never once occurred to her that she was *there to learn* and that *no one expected* her to *know and be able to do everything* from the start. Although passing the strenuous audition justified her place she was still afraid there had been some *mistake* and that *they would throw her out*.

Reading the PresentChild translation, I realized that I, the unplanned 'afterthought' baby, *no longer needed to justify my place* in the family. I no longer needed to remain the baby sister pretending to *understand the grown up world*. I lived in fear of someone lifting the veil and exposing the fact that I was a mere child pretending to be an adult. I was afraid they would then *throw me out*. I did my best not to be a nuisance or attract attention. I was expected to participate in the grown up world, shown what I should aspire to, then given little or no guidance and left to figure out how to get there myself. I observed, imitated, and did what I thought was *expected of me* and was always enormously relieved when I seemed to *do something right* by *accident*. I suddenly realized that the very fact of my birth justified my place here, that I was, and still am, here to learn ... to learn to dance through life!

I sent Emma an email to somehow let her know that I accepted the gift of her message to me. I reminded her that she deserved her place; that she was there to learn, not to know and that she should have fun doing so. I hoped she could *flip the switch* from proving herself to simply 'being' in every moment of her experience. This e-mail however never arrived.

The next morning she mailed me that she felt better and used the exact words, 'I feel as though I have *flipped a switch*. I am going to listen to my body; I am here to learn but also to have fun. This is a *once in a lifetime opportunity and I want to enjoy every minute of it*'. After that, she was able to absorb the material more easily and ask for help. Her experience gave her more than she could have dreamed possible. Could I have asked for better proof of the invisible bonds between parents and children?

I decided to choose to believe in myself, believe that I was not a mistake, trust my feelings and listen to my body even if it means being a nuisance or missing out on 'vital information'. Recently, I was pleased to realize that I was getting much better at doing so. On a weekend with colleagues, I excused myself and went to bed when I was tired instead of forcing myself to stay up. I woke refreshed ready to seize the new day. After all, *I only have one shot at this life and I want to 'be' in and enjoy every minute of it*!

Since these insights, my life has taken a remarkable turn. On my vision board, whilst wishing without restraint, there is an image of a teacher in front of a class. Recently, I was offered an opportunity to teach what is dearest to my heart...*just like that*! I needed to allow myself to learn and I have been offered the best way to do so. After all, "You teach best what you most need to learn" (Richard Bach).

Case 2: Lillian about her son, Ruben

I am pleased to say that Ruben is now doing very well and improving all the time. My son is well and happy. He has loads of friends and a great social life. He is creative, full of humor and doing well at school. Two years ago, however, this was certainly not the case and I cannot even begin to tell you how grateful I am that things have changed since then...

At the age of five, Ruben was diagnosed as having Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD-NOS) with severe nervous tics. He had terrible trouble concentrating and was easily over-stimulated. He *fidgeted* constantly in an attempt to deal with his constant feeling of *tiredness*. One could not help thinking he had Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

Being involved in education myself, I had tried every skill available to me to bring the sort of structure to his life that I thought could help him. Although this made the situation manageable, I felt somehow that control was not the core issue.

Despite my attempts to enforce structure, I was aware that I was close to spinning out of control. Although I suspected there was a link between his problems and myself, it was not until I began applying the PresentChild[®] Method that I discovered what that link was.

As a hardworking teacher and single mother my attempts at bringing structure and substance to my life had *exhausted* me completely. On the surface, my attempts seemed successful, yet on the inside I was struggling on my own without once stopping to ask myself what I needed. I was living up to expectations, but any *deep mutual contact,* even with myself, was practically non-existent. Meeting the expectations of others for too long had turned me into a dutiful robot and I was constantly extremely tired. To escape that horrible feeling ... I tried even harder...did more, and more ...

I followed every single piece of advice offered by recognized institutions. I followed the pictograms, schedules, and courses to the letter until PresentChild helped me realize that my son was presenting me with precisely the pointers I needed. I learned to see, hear, feel... but most importantly, understand these messages and to act on them. I also learned to make the contact that both my son and I needed. He mirrored how *busy* I was and how much energy I was putting into mastering my *fatigue*. By dutifully following and carrying out countless unwritten rules, my life had become soulless. I was always too tired to make social contact with others.

By truly looking at what Ruben needed I was able to see what it was that I needed. I began to *connect* with him in a new and different way. I was forced to slow down completely and consider my own needs. This, by the way, was heartily applauded by Ruben.

Even though I am currently even busier than I was then, I am able to stay connected to the people around me as well as to whatever I am doing. I now achieve more; everything I do yields better results. What is more, I feel an inner peace. Even the pupils I work with are much more involved in their learning processes at school. When working with children with developmental disorders, I am now often able to find the right button to push to motivate them and to get more out of them than was initially expected.

Six months after the PresentChild consultation, my son is also doing far better than anyone ever expected! In a recent IQ test, Ruben scored 35 points higher than he had on the previous test. He is now able to concentrate and has become one of the stronger students in his group. He arranges his play dates himself and now sleeps well. His *fine and gross motor skills*, which had also been a major concern, have improved dramatically.

I now understand much better what *moves* I need to make, and how we can *move* towards one another. I have been stimulated into action, taking both the large as well as the small steps necessary for my personal development.

My son is now a strong PDD-NOS, the nervous tics have largely disappeared, and there is no longer any suggestion of ADHD... Ruben continues to develop and special education is no longer necessary.

I believe I have been given a gift. My son who is now 10 years old has shown me clearly how to connect – with him, with myself, and also with my pupils.

Research

Research on the effectiveness of the PresentChild[®] Method was completed in 2010. This was an independent study accomplished by two students studying fifty parents and PresentChild Translators. The most important conclusions were that within four consultations there had been established a great amelioration of various coinciding complaints of the child's and the parents' situations. The amelioration was ranked 4.8 on a 5 point scale and lasted at least several months.

Parents stated they had made huge leaps regarding their self-consciousness, and their families were benefitting too. Both parents and PresentChild Translators observed a big surplus value using this method. Parents stated that besides the fact that the complaints of their children had disappeared, an increase of happiness in both the children and the parents occurred and they had a much better mutual understanding. Translators found working with the method very rewarding because the source of the problem was being addressed and cleared. Although the results were not published, most of the results are on my website in Dutch and English (Venema, web references).

Another study of 500 users of the method is planned in the winter of 2012. If these results show similar effects, the scientific institute 'Louis Bolk' in the Netherlands will proceed with a more rigorous study.

Conclusion

Healing power is not only present within the boundaries of one person but also in families. I fully trust in the healing powers of nature. Treating the child without helping the parents could be compared to ignoring or even suppressing the family symptoms.

If we draw the conclusion that only the child is ill and needs to be cured, we don't understand the healing intention, the higher purpose of this child. It is like putting ourselves above the laws of

nature. But if we trust children to show whatever is necessary to heal this family, we will notice that we work together with this power that is so abundantly present in children. If we can help parents really understand their children on this level, we will notice that children flourish. They don't have relapses after the treatment. They stay well. The purpose that the children have in their behaviours or complaints is so essential that no treatment that would only involve the child can permanently suppress them. Life will always find a new way to bring[the issues to the surface]. That is not a relapse; it is a magnificent chance that life repeatedly offers until it is understood.

I have started to call this method a gentle revolution. It is a new vision of cure and how to achieve it. When parents accept their children's messages, the children themselves also feel understood, supported; they experience parental love in its purest quality. That is what the children need. That is what creates wellbeing, health, joy and happiness in the family, both for parents and children.

I experience a huge advantage from working with this method. My work has become more fulfilling. I don't need to study hard to find the right remedy. I just have to listen, observe and record, and then to translate and submit the message to the parents and 'the magic' unfolds. The cures are steady and long-lasting because the totality is cured and not a part. I feel I can really contribute to the higher purpose of mankind and I am thankful to be able to spread love and healing for children and parents all over the world.

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Call for therapists and health care workers to learn and/or teach this method

My colleague, Jean Thompson and I want to spread this method around the world. We are looking for professionals who would like to learn this method and eventually even teach it to other health workers. Needed: People with a bright spirit, sufficient life experience, sense of reality and affinity for language. Please get in touch through the address below or fill in the training form at the website www.PresentChild.com.

Janita Venema is Classical Homeopath, PresentChild Translator and author in Leeuwarden, The Netherlands. In 1994 she developed the method 'Fluisterkind' (PresentChild[®]). In 2004 she started training professionals and in 2008 published her book *Het Fluisterkind*. The English edition, *PresentChild – A gift for you and your family*, was published in 2012 by Homeolinks Publishers www.homeolinks.nl) office@homeolinks.nl. The book is reviewed in this issue of IJHC.



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