

BOOK REVIEW

ALETHA JAUCH SOLTER. JOCUL ATAȘAMENTULUI. REZOLVAREA PROBLEMELEOR DE COMPORTAMENT ALE COPILULUI PRIN JOACĂ, RÂS ȘI CONECTARE (Attachment Play: How to solve children's behaviour problems with play, laughter, and connection, Shining Star Press, 2013) Bucharest, Herald Publishing House, 2015, 272 pages, ISBN 978-973-111-624-2

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RECENZII

ALETHA JAUCH SOLTER. JOCUL ATA AMENTULUI. REZOLVAREA PROBLEMELEOR DE COMPORTAMENTALE COPILULUI PRIN JOAC , RÂS I CONECTARE (Attachment Play: How to solve children’s behaviour problems with play, laughter, and connection. Shining Star Press, 2013)

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Andreea-Diana Scoda*

Aletha Jauch Solter’s book, whose original title is “Attachment Play: How to solve child’s behaviour problems with play, laughter and connection,” sees light in 2013, in the United States, where it was published by Shining Star Pr. In Romania, under the “Parentaj” (Parenting) collection, this volume was translated from English by Sanda Watt and published in 2016, by Herald Publishing House, in Bucharest, Romania.

It is clear enough to recognize why this work was proposed for translation and printing by a field specialist, since we are dealing with a volume which, for Romanian psychology and pedagogy, is of high applicability. Through this volume, the author wishes to answer some important questions which, of course, every parent, psychologist, educator or school counsellor places throughout his or her career and in this respect, Solter reflects on usual problems which adults could encounter, frequent suggestions posed, while offering advice based mostly on research results. In other words, we are dealing with an important effort in the field of parenting which is desirable for education, child psychology, psychosocial stages, sociology, etc. based on empirical data.

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One of the central themes in this book is that of “play” with emphases on practicing and using different games or activities, in which Solter considers this to be like a *modus operandi* of “reducing stress, consolidating attachment and resolves behaviour problems...” (2016, p. 13). In Solter’s view parents are very important in ensuring discipline, play time and connection: “the parent-child healthy attachment is essential for the emotional well-being of children and the parent-child social interaction, in which play has a fundamental role in establishing solid attachment realities” (2016, p 23). In this respect, we can see that the author offers another significant theme that is interconnected to the one above, “attachment” which is rather the core of this book, a theory that was merely developed by John Bowlby (1969). To a great extent, we can draw a logical conclusion by taking into account the title of the book “Attachment play” which highlights, nevertheless, how important it is for individuals to understand, grasp and practice these concepts portrayed throughout this volume.

This book contains an introduction, three parts with several chapters and in addition, an Annex, as reference for her readers with the role of offering resume tables that describe every form of “playing games” proposed through the use of attachment.

The first part of this book includes four subchapters that simply contextualize the idea of “attachment play”, alongside with the forms of playing, general recommendations for the readers and suggestion when encountering difficulties in achieving an expected behaviour from the child or adolescent. A part from this, the author provides the readers with definitions of the terms examined and sets of the scenes or case studies familiar to the writer. The author argues in this part of the volume that “play” can be conducted easily and spontaneously creating a friendly atmosphere for the participants so that the “players” achieve their role and goal through connection. She goes on with highlighting the nine forms of attachment playing games (activities) that could be used in relation to the varies topics discussed: “Non-directive games centred on the child”, “Symbolic games”, “Interdependent games”, “Absurd games”, “Separation games”, “Reversing power play games”, “Regression games”, “Physical contact activities” and “Activities and cooperation games” (2016, pp. 28-49). Her main recommendation for adults is to “follow the clues offered by the child” (2016, p. 50). In other

words, it is important and useful to listen to what the child is communicating no matter the lack of consent on the adults' part.

The writer's main approach in this part of the book is to inform the readers about these forms of attachment playing games (activities) that would encourage a worthy connection between child-adult and vice-versa, as a result will soften the adult's portrait that they have no other alternative than to embroiled the power-ratio style of discipline when a child/their child is out of line. Adults may consider that disciplinary actions are the key response to obtaining obedience, but it isn't always the case as readers will discover. Even more precisely, Solter advocates throughout this volume that adults should focus more on: play time, creating good connections with the child, receiving happiness and laughter from the child, etc., through the use of attachment that can overcome those conflictual tensions in the long-run (disobedience, misbehaviour, tantrums, etc.).

As for the second part of this book, the author is concentrated more on giving examples, proposing sets of disciplinary techniques or instruments that the adult could run-through (e.g., time-out) in order to overcome those conflictual behavioural situations, such as bed-time or covering homework-time, etc. To this extent, she discusses how non-punitive discipline could be overcome, how to achieve cooperation, how to overcome fury, aggression, lies, cheating or stealing from children, are just a few of the topics discussed. Another recommendation undertaken by the writer is the habit of using "reward" and/or "punishment" as means to overcome negative behaviour from the child. She considers that this shouldn't be taken likely, without intrinsic motivation (child's own comprehension), subsequently as an alternative Solter agrees on imposing disciplinary rules in accordance with the age of the child, the use of practice, the use of power ratio fairly, along with other techniques.

In the last part of this book, the author presents some more delicate topics which leave to some extent emotional impressions: "Traumatic births", the "Birth of a brother or a sister", "Parent's divorce", "Natural disasters and terrorism", "Sickness, accidents and hospitalization", "Separation trauma", "School stress", "Phobia and anxiety", "Preparation for difficult events" and "Parental fury". The author hopes to guide the adult and, to an even

greater extent, the child in the direction in which they could solve disciplinary problems or problems related to different traumas through playing activity/ game perspectives described above.

The readers can notice that each chapter is independent, allowing them to pick out areas of interest. However, the book is more rewarding if one reads it from cover to cover, as some themes introduced give a sense of consistency between the chapters. All chapters contain guidance to facilitate practice, short case studies and brief summaries of the most suitable forms of attachment play games (activities) for each topic dealt with in this volume. Equally, the author recommends “exercises to follow” with the necessary explanations for each “exercise” presented, while making the most of the theoretical part in achieving the goal of the question-title.

In the framework of these three parts, with much ability Solter guides us, provides examples, describes techniques and operational methods for different topics proposed in harmony with each of the nine forms of playing activity/ game proposed (how we identify them, how to approach them, how to achieve results, how they could be approached in the stages of development between 0-12 years). In other words, the author constantly makes the transition from the theoretical approach to the practical one, recommending an illustration of how to deal with a certain conflictual situations, and in this context the reader is guided, facilitating the capacity to tackle the different issues assumed.

We can therefore perceive the translation and the appearance of this book in Romanian of importance for literature reading, useful for those with pedagogical or non-pedagogical approach, who are looking for a starting point and responses to apprehend particular behavioural patterns or challenges (for instance, children’s fury and aggression, siblings quarrel, lack of cooperation, etc.). The author addresses as well direct problems in an educational manner, concerning daily life problems for any parent, educator, physician, etc., that have to deal with a variety of problems. An artistic part of the author’s work is revealed in her suggestions, stories without, however, neglecting the scientific confirmation of these practical proposals. The annex of more than 30 pages is just one of the examples in this respect. The author concludes her work with a short introduction on a new issue “What is aware

parenting?” (see Annex B at the end of the book) where she discusses the new philosophy for parents and whereabouts they can receive more information about the subject.

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