

Family Myths May Indicate Pathology

► MYTHS and marriage go together like horse and carriage until the myths get out of hand. Then they become conspicuous elements in a neurotic relationship.

Dr. Antonio J. Ferreira of the Mental Research Institute in Palo Alto, Calif., defined a family myth as a firmly rooted belief which sets up different roles within the family, explains relationships and provides hidden rules of conduct for each member.

The myth may be anything from: "My wife is dominant," to "My husband has the legal mind," to "We were happy until our son got into trouble." Though these convictions seem blatantly false to outsiders, all members

of the family share and support them and act accordingly.

Even the healthiest family probably needs a certain amount of myth for smooth operation, Dr. Ferreira said, but "pathologic families are often conspicuous for their myths." In fact, some of these families give the impression that myths are controlling practically all aspects of the family interaction, leaving little freedom for spontaneous action or for change.

Dr. Ferreira's interest in myths was first stimulated by a neurotic family of three—parents and a son—all of whom agreed that the mother was domineering. She was bossy and animated while her husband was passive and unassuming.

Each family member was asked to separately fill out a questionnaire indicating what action he would take in a series of hypothetical situations.

Then the family was asked to make out the same questionnaire together. Whichever member had the highest match between his test and the family test, was judged most dominant.

All who observed the family scene in action fully expected the mother to come up with an extremely high score. She took over completely, in contrast to the father who sat back watching his cigarette smoke, saying little.

When the results were in the woman showed a very modest score, slightly below average. According to this test, the man was considerably more dominant and the accepted family belief was apparently a myth.

Dr. Ferreira's report was included in a 234-page booklet, *Family Structure, Dynamics and Therapy*, published by the American Psychiatric Association.

• *Science News*, 89:249 April 9, 1966

SERVICES to you . . . By SCIENCE NEWS

- Do You Read SCIENCE NEWS, but don't subscribe? If you are one of the "Pass-along" readers of Science News . . . and we estimate there are over 270,000 . . . why not read your own copy each week? Subscribe now.

. . . 1 year \$5.50; . . . 2 years \$10.00; . . . 3 years \$14.50 (check one)

- HERE is a Check List of other aids to scientists, teachers, students that can come to you from SCIENCE NEWS.

THINGS of science An experimental kit issued each month with interesting specimens of new products of scientific research. Actual samples of educational value, explanations and experimental directions. Use for experimentation and for teaching. Great scientific fun for students, teachers and science-minded laymen in all walks of life. memberships at \$5 a year (add \$1 overseas postage)

SCIENCE PROJECTS HANDBOOK

A variety of examples of successful projects done by National Science Fair-International finalists and Science Talent Search winners and members of the Honors Group; suggestions on planning and carrying out projects and exhibits; new ideas for research and sources of information and equipment. How to become a scientist is discussed and helpful suggestions given.

Each 50¢ (add 5¢ postage)

Postpaid 10 copies for \$5

-----copies

THOUSANDS OF SCIENCE PROJECTS

So you want a suggestion for a project report? This 48-page booklet lists classified titles of exhibits shown at science fairs and/or as projects for the annual Science Talent Search.

Each 25¢ 10 copies for \$1

-----copies

WONDERFUL WORLD OF SCIENCE

A guide specifically compiled for students, teachers, club sponsors. Free gifts and low-cost samples by the thousands . . . films, photos, kits, books, plans, scientific apparatus. Covers the broad field of science from anthropology through zoology.

Each 50¢ (add 5¢ postage)

Postpaid 10 copies for \$5

-----copies

PROJECTS: SPACE

The exciting story of U. S. space exploration with reports on fourteen fascinating student science projects in space age science. Written with the technical assistance of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

Each 45¢ (add 5¢ postage)

Postpaid 10 copies for \$4.50

-----copies

THE NATURAL WORLD:

A GUIDE TO NORTH AMERICAN WILDLIFE

An incomparable guide to the plants and animals of the seashores, mountains, plains, deserts and forests, with more than 80 photographs.

Each 75¢ (add 5¢ postage)

Postpaid 10 copies for \$7.50

-----copies

LAWS OF MATTER UP-TO-DATE

The fundamental laws of physics which have been changed as the result of new discoveries of the atomic age.

Each 10¢

Postpaid 100 copies for \$3

-----copies

THE CHEMICAL ELEMENTS

Their properties, sources, most important isotopes, characteristic compounds, places in the periodic table and histories of their discoveries, including announcements. Up-to-date revision includes element 103. Fully indexed, paper bound. Invaluable for reference.

Each 50¢ (add 5¢ postage)

Postpaid 10 copies for \$5

-----copies

EXPERIMENTING WITH CHEMISTRY

A guide and laboratory manual including detailed explanations of reactions and processes for students who wish to experiment in chemistry. More than 125 experiments. Special sections on sympathetic inks, spectacular reactions, spontaneous combustion, blow pipe analysis and metallurgy.

Postpaid \$2

-----copies

SCIENCE EXHIBITS

How to select material, plan its presentation, display, label and light it, and describe the work done.

Postpaid \$2

-----copies

150 SCIENCE EXPERIMENTS STEP-BY-STEP

From the exciting worlds of modern science—fascinating experiments in chemistry, biology, physics and weather with instructions for making your own equipment. Complete with Periodic Table of Elements, Laws of Matter, Weights and Measures, Centigrade to Fahrenheit Conversion Table, Charts of Animal and Plant Kingdoms.

Each 60¢ (add 5¢ postage)

Postpaid 10 copies for \$6

-----copies

ORGANIC CHEMISTRY FOR THE HOME LAB

Learn to think chemically . . . Mauve, the first aniline dye, was discovered one hundred years ago by a young chemist who followed where his curiosity led him. You can make this and other beautiful dyes, interesting plastics, fundamental chemicals, by following these clear directions.

Postpaid \$2

-----copies

PERIODIC TABLE OF ELEMENTS

Both Mendeleev and Bohr arrangements. An up-to-date chart of the chemical elements by groups and series with spaces for new elements through hypothetical No. 118, to be filled in as announced.

Each 25¢

Postpaid 10 copies for \$1

-----copies

HOW TO GET INTO SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING

A leaflet published by Science Service to inspire and inform students interested in scientific careers . . . tips for students, necessary prerequisites, How to do a Science Project, career possibilities.

Each 10¢

Postpaid 100 copies for \$3

-----copies

TOTAL ENCLOSED

(UNESCO coupons accepted)

\$

SCIENCE CLUBS OF AMERICA

Free affiliation with SCA for adult sponsored science clubs. A free copy of the SCA Science Activities Handbook and other educational aids are sent to help in the organization and conduct of interesting and worthwhile activities for a successful science program. Affiliation open to youth leaders of all nations. Write today!

Your Name

Street

City or Town

State

Zip Code

Mail to

4.9.6

SCIENCE NEWS, 1719 N Street, N.W., Washington, D. C. 20036