

## **From Chaos to Coherence.**

### **Psychotherapy with a boy who has the diagnosis ADHD.**

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Chapter one...

#### **OUR FIRST MEETING IN THE WAITING ROOM**

##### ***How do you do***

When I meet Douglas for the first time, he is a tall, brown-skinned six year-old boy of African origin, who darts around in every direction in the waiting room. He has come with his adoptive parents, Margareta and Gunnar, for a psychological assessment, which I am going to conduct.

The boy is hyperactive and lacks a firm posture. He flings himself about and slobbers. He is in constant motion and spreads a strong feeling of agitation around himself. He kicks his feet around, bumps into the furniture and knocks a flowerpot down on the floor. Suddenly he jumps up and, before anyone has got a chance to stop him, he scuffs the wall with his feet. Douglas does not, so to say, always have his head up and his feet down. He is wearing new clothes, which just hang there on his body. Nothing is buttoned and nothing seems to fit. Douglas seems to have shut off the normal ability to feel in various parts of his body. In all the tumult he is causing, one of his shoes falls off and I notice there is a pebble in it. He has had that it in his shoe without showing any reaction of pain. He has not noticed anything. He gives the impression of living in a constant state of pain and thus a little stone in his shoe is neither here nor there.

Douglas appears to be in a state of psychological dissolution and has a severe lack of inner structure. He breaks loose from his dad's grip and rushes at other adults who are sitting in the waiting room. He seems to perceive the children who are also there as objects. He pushes them aside, regardless of whether they are in his way or not. It is

hard to understand what Douglas's intentions are. If he actually has any, he is anyhow not able to hold on to them. He is near-sighted and is wearing thick glasses but it is hard to determine how he sees or what he sees. He does not focus his eyes on anything even for a moment. He does not look me in the eye, not even in the direction where I am standing. He also behaves as though he does not hear anything since he neither listens nor answers when I speak to him.

Gunnar is finally forced to get a new grip on his son. He wrestles him down and holds on to him so he cannot move, which seems to be completely necessary. The grip, good and secure, makes it possible for Gunnar and Margareta to talk with Douglas. It has a calming effect on him and he sits down on the couch between his mom and dad. The scene is of course painful for his parents. Margareta has tears in her eyes and Gunnar shakes his head.

Since I have not yet had a chance to greet Douglas, I want to take his hand and tell him my name. His mom lifts his hand forward toward mine and I take a firm grip on it. I hold on to his hand for a while, even though he starts to pull and tear away, while I introduce myself. I also tell him that all of us will go up many stairs to the room where Douglas and I are going to be. I say that his parents will meet a lady named Birgitta, who is going to talk with them, in a room next to ours. When I have finished speaking and let go of his hand, he takes aim to kick me in the shins. I have expected this and I am also faster than he is, so his kicks are left hanging in the air. After half an hour we are ready to go up the stairs and start the session in my room. Douglas breaks quickly away from his parents and me and dashes up all the stairs. He does not know where he is going nor does he seem to care where he is going to end up. It could be somewhere! It could be nowhere!

This is the first of the five visits, during a span of three weeks, which it takes me to conduct a psychological assessment on Douglas.