

Alienated Children Could Likely Pass a Lie Detector Test

By Linda J. Gottlieb, LMFT, LCSW-R

Alienated children eventually **BELIEVE** the frivolous, malicious, denigrating accusations they hurl against their alienated parent. Alienated children engage in a pattern of either mimicking their alienating parent's falsehoods about the alienated parent, or they concoct their own bizarre allegations. When lies are repeatedly expressed, the lies are eventually believed by the storytellers no matter how frivolous or bizarre the lies are.

Why is this so? Firstly, the need for a parent is part of the instinct for survival due to our long dependency period. In order to overcome this powerful instinct to have and need a parent, alienated children must either accept or fabricate falsehoods about the alienated parent. In other words, because it is so anti-instinctual to hate and reject a parent, a rationale must be invented. The rationale often becomes a delusional system, which is one of many reasons why alienation is deemed to be a profound form of psychological child abuse, and adopting delusional thoughts can lead to psychosis!

Research demonstrates that even adjudicated abused and neglected children do not reject parents. Instead, they bond to their abusive parents and defend and protect them. So alienated children need elaborate fabrications to justify their rejection of a competent, loving, supportive, and involved parent

Why are alienated children so susceptible to the brainwashing of the alienating parent? Research (by Elizabeth Loftus, PhD, for example) found that it is very easy to implant false memories, even in adults. Successful implantation can be achieved as quickly as by the third weekly interview. And the research by Julia Shaw, PhD, revealed that she was able to implant the false memory of having committed a crime in more than 70% of the college students who had participated in her research!

So just imagine how much easier and effective it must be for a parent, upon whom the child is so dependent for love, support, nurture, and guidance, to implant a false memory.

Let us be mindful of the comments by Christopher Barden, Ph.D., J.D., LP, psychologist and attorney, having received two national research awards in psychology and a law degree with honors from Harvard Law School:

“There can be no credible controversy about the power of parents to influence children.”

Dr. Barden further challenged every professional who intervenes in child custody cases to recognize their “critical obligation to carefully review the influence of parents, therapists or other adults on the attitudes, beliefs and memories of children.”