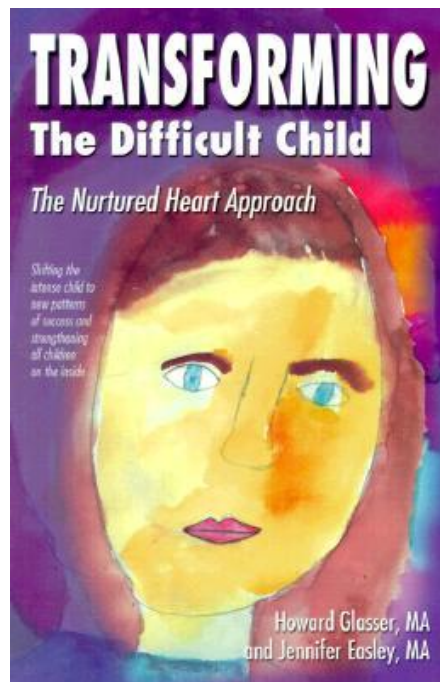




# Transforming the Difficult Child: The Nurtured Heart Approach

*Howard Glasser*

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**Transforming the Difficult Child: The Nurtured Heart Approach** Howard Glasser  
Shifting the intense child to new patterns of success and strengthening all children on the inside.

## Transforming the Difficult Child: The Nurtured Heart Approach Details

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## From Reader Review Transforming the Difficult Child: The Nurtured Heart Approach for online ebook

### Derek Jones says

Some children don't respond to traditional parenting well. They have some combination of low attention, low empathy, attraction to risk, and high energy that makes them an exhausting and sometimes embarrassing undertaking. I've attended Dr. Glasser's classes, which cover much of the same material here in this book, and he does a great job of pointing out that these personality attributes don't have to be negative -- but they do have to be managed differently.

The techniques do work! However, with any unconventional approach that gives real results (like various diets), the problem is in sustaining the system, which (because traditional parenting hasn't been working) doesn't feel "normal", which can then lead to lapses and "refresher courses" every so often. Still, like diets, this doesn't mean it's not worth doing. They are effective, but not simple.

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### Aspidistra says

What I mostly got from this book was a better understanding of the emotional dynamics between parent and child when a child is acting out. It helped me to see some counterintuitive ways that I could help my child (and myself) gain self-control. This is not a book specifically for adoptive parents, but many adoptive parents of older children may find it helpful.

The book recommends eventually instituting a very structured points system for helping a child to gain privileges or treats from good behavior. I think this would work well for many kids, but it was too complicated and too punitive for mine. Nevertheless, we have adopted some of these methods in a more informal way with great success.

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### Dorothy says

After taking a new job as Day Treatment Facilitator for Treatment Resistant Children and working for about a month, frustrated and ready to call it quits, I found this book, read it in its entirety in one weekend, went back to work on Monday, started applying the techniques and immediately saw changes. Not only was I impressed, but so was my boss and the owner, whom happens to be a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW). She read the book and it became the cornerstone of how we run the program now. Kids who were doomed to become placed on Psychotropic Medications and/or Institutionalized have made strides in the program. We have a high success rate of kids graduating the program and going on to be well liked citizens in the community. This book gave me the tools to help change and better the lives of others!

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### Brenda Schenck says

Have begun using this approach at work with all students and have decided to commit to it for the school year to see how it goes.

## Ellis Amdur says

There is Pollyanna sweetness to this book that drives me up the wall (hence, the 4 star rating). BUT, it is, nonetheless, a wonderful resource for families who have children with behavioral problems. The approach focuses on kids earning points to get privileges, but NOT gold stars that are meaningless. Points are used so that the child becomes responsible for earning all the good things in life through good behavior. It has the best way of imposing consequences that I've ever seen, taking into account the requirements, legal and otherwise, that face a 21st century parent. Finally, this approach is a great way to start when the parents have had difficulty with anger in their own right. Most parents with anger difficulties are frustrated, unskilled, or feel profoundly incompetent to change their miserable situation with their kids, whom they, nonetheless, love. This approach gives the parents a "toolbox" so that they know what to do. They learn to set limits and discipline, and give their kids something up-to-now lacking – real guidance and leadership. Again, the tone can easily make the reader think that this book is a "liberal," – let the children have their way – type of book, but read on. It is quite the opposite. It offers parents a chance to be really strong, really clear on values, and openly loving at the same time. In particular, this will prove very useful for parents of children who have the justifiably controversial diagnoses of ADHD, Oppositional-Defiant Disorder, Intermittent Explosive Disorder - these diagnoses that are all-to-often - adjectives that describe kids who don't conform to others' wishes, in school or home. Before I would ever allowed my child to receive any medication for so-called behavioral disorders, I would definitely use the information in this book - I've used it to work with a number of parents with very beneficial effects.

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## Jackie says

Not only has this book helped me understand the psychology of oppositional behavior, which I have been observing in my son for 14 years, it has provided the key to unlocking the mystery of how to parent this child. Since I started reading this book, I have stopped feeling so hopeless and frustrated when trying to parent him because I now know the best way to deal with him. The book has altered my perspective and I'm now seeing and commenting on good things he is doing, rather than the wrong. I think he is feeling all the positive energy...that he has been needing all along. This feels like a much better parenting approach...of all children. Really grateful to have stumbled across this book!

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## Tryn says

This is a book that one frazzled parent recommends to another. A friend recommended it to me and I recommended it to my sister and another friend, when they called to chat about kids. I've read a lot of parenting books over the years, but this is the most practical, confidence-inspiring one I've encountered so far. The title, however, is misleading and probably steers too many parents away who would actually benefit from reading it. The very practical, specific advice in this book would be helpful for any parent raising any child. I don't consider any of my children "difficult" but what I learned in this book is useful to me on a daily basis. It really comes down to the energy we give to our children. Children seek out our energy. If they don't get enough of it, they will demand it with bad behavior. We can give them our energy in a positive form or a negative form—light or dark. When we affirm and appreciate them, we strengthen them internally. When we strategically place the rope like the trainers for Shamoo do when teaching a killer whale to jump, then we help them to experience success built upon success.

I've been hesitant to use praise and rewards with my children because I do not want them to be focussed on those things, but this book shows me how to use them in appropriate ways that are more about appreciation and earning privileges. I need to read this book again.

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### **Catherine Gillespie says**

I read Transforming the Difficult Child: The Nurtured Heart Approach after seeing it recommended as a resource for calm and effective parenting (particularly about getting kids through their homework without fuss, although the book is more comprehensive than just that!). It took me a bit to get past the title. I don't refer to my children as "difficult," nor do I find that title helpful even in kids who are difficult. The authors use the term "intense" in a couple of places, and I wish they would have stuck with that in the title too. In fact, I think the title could be off-putting to parents like me whose kids are basically great but sometimes have bad behavior. That said, the authors note that their methods are applicable to all kids, not just "difficult" ones.

Once I got past the title, I found some helpful information. Some of these ideas have been in other books I've read—putting energy into positive affirmation rather than giving attention only to negative behaviors, etc—but this book gave detailed examples that helped me think through how to implement the ideas with my elementary-aged kids.

{Read my full review here}

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### **Mistiema1 Downs says**

I was given this book to read after finally visiting a child psychologist to get help dealing with my very intense, difficult son. I was extremely skeptical and resistant at first, but after implementing just the first step of the Nurtured Heart Approach, I saw instant improvement in my child. This in turn gave me confidence that I needed to continue on my parenting journey in a positive, heartfelt direction.

Do not be put off by the title. Though the book is specifically geared towards the "difficult" child, the results you will see with an average child are just as wonderful! We have four children and implemented the ideas across the board. I am now sure that each of my children is getting the attention they need from me each day.

The Nurtured Heart Approach itself is divided into simple, easily implementable steps that any dedicated parent can do with just a few minutes each day. Each chapter will give the reader additional information and encouragement for each step along the way. There are also chapters and an appendix relating to crossing the boundary from home to school, where many intense children struggle most.

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### **The Badger says**

Nurtured Heart definitely works, but it seems to be an offshoot of Parent Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) and the Child Adult Relationship Enhancement (CARE) approach. While Nurtured Heart is expensive and time consuming to teach to all staff members in a school or facility, CARE can be taught in a couple one-hour staff meetings. Nurtured Heart is aimed at educators, but fails to take into account the other people

children see during their usual day: the custodian, the clerk, the bus driver, their PARENTS! PCIT and CARE make sure these people are also trained.

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### **Molly Ricks says**

I've been reading this book slowly, implementing each step as I learn about it. I've actually seen a big difference in behavior in both of my boys so far.

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### **Carey Cavanaugh says**

Doesn't matter what kind of child you have. This is an incredible philosophy that respects and finds successes in children.

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### **Alli Todd says**

This is a book I will definitely re-read!

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### **Dey Stanley says**

Main concept: our kids want our energy. If they can't get it in a positive way, they'll take negative. We unintentionally end up rewarding bad behaviour by giving more energy to it. Think about asking your kid to put on pajamas: if they do it, you say thanks and move on to the rest of getting ready for bed. That's pretty low energy and you are moving towards separation. But if kiddo doesn't put on pajamas? Maybe yelling, wrestling the kid into the pjs - which is much higher energy.

I've taken pages of notes, and have started implementing the techniques with both kids (1 who compulsively attacks boundaries, one who is super compliant). Only 2 days in and seeing much better behaviour, plus acting out (temper tantrums and meltdowns) not lasting as long.

It does require me to pay more attention than I had been, and that lack of attention has been a big part of the problem. So having targets to hit each hour for giving them neutral or positive feedback helps me stay focused. (Neutral observations don't set off kids defenses - have you ever said "no, not really" to a compliment? - while letting them know you are really seeing them.)

So far, we aren't doing the suggested earning credits for privileges. I'm simply not organized enough for that.

I'm happy to share my notes with anyone.

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### **Isabel says**

Not sure the Shamu analogy has the same connotation that it did in the pre-Blackfish days, but there's a lot that does still seem to apply since the 2013 update.

I have started using the positive focus and video tape moments with my students. It occurs to me that this really is rewarding and worthwhile for all kids. And really, all adults. What can it hurt to honestly tell someone that they're doing things well? Plus it is affirming to take time to focus on what is going well in my class instead of losing sight of that in constant battle with things that are a bit--ah--off.

I take issue with the idea that filling out the little eval sheets is only 30 seconds of effort on behalf of teachers. The reality is that it's a LOT of effort for the kid to remember to share the sheet and even more effort if the teacher has to get involved with reminders, etc. I feel pretty ADHD myself in the course of a day teaching 7th graders. Little "low effort" sheets like the one described are surprisingly difficult to deal with in the hustle and bustle of the classroom.

Still, if I could figure out a way to work it in to my day, I'd love to do this with about 6 or 7 students in my class. I believe, as Glasser says, that the number of kids needing this kind of intervention is only going to increase, so I really appreciate his giving me a possible "tool" to work with my kids. He is totally right that at the moment, mainstreaming is often very exclusionary. It bothers me to think that this is happening in my classroom and I really hope that with the NHA, I can start to turn this around and make all of my kids active, engaged learners in our classroom community.

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