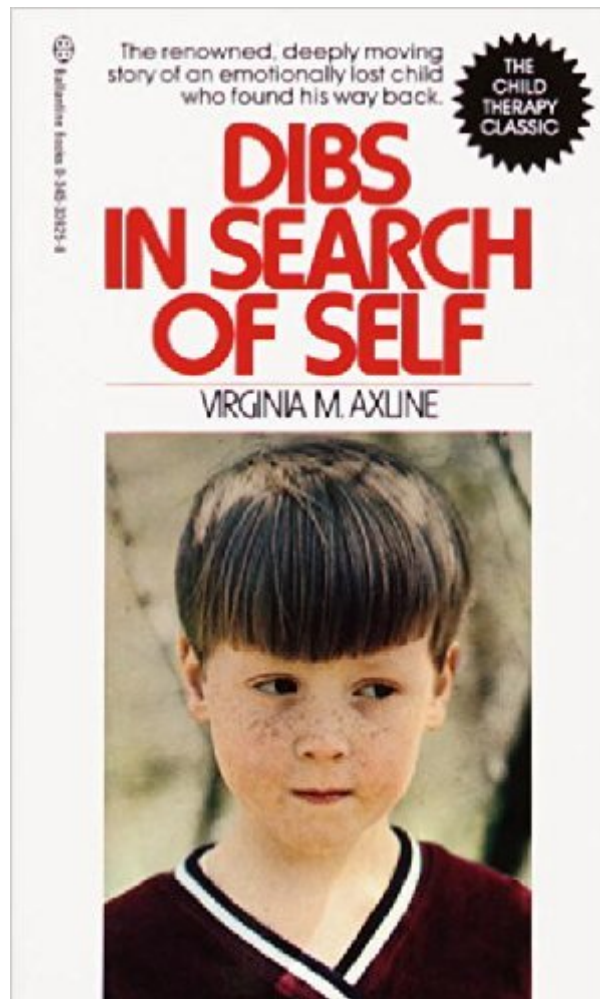


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Dibs In Search Of Self: The Renowned, Deeply Moving Story Of An Emotionally Lost Child Who Found His Way Back



Synopsis

The classic of child therapy. Dibs will not talk. He will not play. He has locked himself in a very special prison. And he is alone. This is the true story of how he learned to reach out for the sunshine, for life . . . how he came to the breathless discovery of himself that brought him back to the world of other children.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (170 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

What could have caused a 5-year-old child with an IQ of 168 to clam up and stop talking, playing or laughing? Virginia Axline, author of 'Play Therapy' finds out as she records the progress of Dibs in this book that has since become a child therapy classic. A review in .com held forth that Dibs is autistic, but it is clear to me that he is not. Dibs is a child who deliberately withheld speech and affection as a means of self-defense against his cold, unloving, high- achieving and demanding parents and their battery of tests to prove him gifted. He does not suffer a neurological disorder nor is he autistic. This remarkably moving and honest book gives credit not to the therapist/author for having worked a miracle, rather, it is the child and his inner strength and resolve that are given praise. The amazingly articulate child acts out his anger through his play of dolls. In a poignant part, Dibs reverses the parent-child role and 'makes' a 'mother' doll build a mountain upon the instruction of the 'boy' doll. "It is too hard to do," said Dibs. "Nobody can build a mountain. But I'll make her do it. She'll have to build the mountain and do it right. There is a right way and wrong way of doing things and you will do it the right way." After some thought, he decided he would help the 'mother'

and not impose such an onerous task on her. He talks of love and caring for his mother and sister. This shows that Dibs, despite his frustration, fear and anger, has great capacity for compassion, empathy and forgiveness. The therapy sessions with his non-judgmental therapist helped Dibs be aware of his feelings and of matters within and without his control.

...of an inaccurate perspective. In terms of writing quality and emotional "pull," this book deserves 5 stars. And, like Freud, it is important to read -- in the correct context. Axline was a pioneer of play therapy (for individuals and groups), and I think there is no doubt that it is a fruitful method for interacting with troubled children. In my practice as a psychologist, I have certainly found play therapy to be extremely productive because a) it is the natural "language" of children, and b) it is also one of the most important ways children learn. So...yes, I believe Dibs (as presented by Axline -- we do have to rely on her description) closely fits the criteria for Asperger's Syndrome, a syndrome on the autistic spectrum where very bright children capable of complex thinking may be quite impaired in basic social, motor and communication skills. And I do believe her therapy with him was very helpful because she provided a model for social interaction, one-on-one (group situations were probably too overwhelming) that allowed him to increase his positive interactions with others (which, in turn, increased their positive response to him). I sympathize with reviewers who are outraged at the use of "refrigerator mother" theory in the book -- and with the reviewers who experienced the pain of unloving or abusive parents. No, an unloving or uninvolved parent cannot "cause" autism. However, it is also true that no autistic child was ever helped by a lack of love or being locked away from others.

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