

Public speaking, private consultations, self-help books & CDs covering sex therapy, parenting and self-development



DR JAN'S
ONLINE SHOP

DR JANET HALL

CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST & HYPNOTHERAPIST
POWER AND PASSION



drjanethall.com.au



bedwetting.com.au



sex-therapy.com.au

The trauma of imprisonment.

I was interviewed on Radio 3UE regarding the horror story of the week.

Josef Fritzl, a 73-year-old electrical engineer, has confessed to locking up his daughter, Elisabeth Fritzl in a window-less cellar for 24 years and fathering her seven children.

Three of those children, Kerstin, 19, Stefan, 18 and five-year-old Felix, were kept in the dungeon all their lives with their only view of the outside world provided by their television and radio.

Just how would Elisabeth, and her six children now be coping?
And what psychological damage would have been caused?

1. We understand that three of Elisabeths children were kept in the cellar with their mother. They were apparently told by their father that they would be gassed if they tried to escape. What impact would this have had on them?

Living under the threat of death, should you rebel, would be psychological and emotional torture of the worst degree. It would take away any sense of identity, self-esteem or self-efficacy (belief in the power to do).

2. What psychological damage do you think the children will undergo once they realise their father is also their grandfather?

They would be placed in total despair at trying to make sense of it. They would be overwhelmed by shame as they learned of societys judgement of this scenario. They could be suicidal.

3. How well would the children be able to socialize, if they have never been anywhere except for the cellar they lived in?

It would be as if they are in kindergarten, learning how to socialize with others. They might constantly feel inadequate, inferior, confused and angry, which would give them no sense of self-esteem.

4. What do you think would have compelled Josef Fritzl to have held his daughter and their children captive for such a long period of time?

Dr Janet Hall's newsletter

Don't forget Dr Jan's other newsletter - Passion News - subscribe at the bottom of this email.

He is a sociopath, a sexual predator typically justifying his behaviour by saying he was protecting them from societwhilst he was really doing it for his own gratification.

- 5. The children that were kept captive are suffering with vitamin D deficiencies and have poor posture from having to live in cramped conditions. How long do you think it will take for them to adapt to their surroundings now?**

I am not qualified to talk about physiological recovery. However studies have proven that prolonged sensory deprivation can cause severe lifetime disorders, physically, emotionally and psychologically.

- 6. Felix and Stefan, the brothers kept captive in the cellar are also unable to speak properly. Do you think they will ever be able to speak and socialize properly?**

Yes, eventually they will learn to speak properly as speech will be reinforced by their social world. As to whether they learn to socialize - that is lead an independent and well-adjusted life - only time will tell. It depends on how deeply their lack of social development has affected them.

- 7. Do you think the children will be able to now cope with the outside world?**

These children have never developed the intellectual, emotional, or physical skills necessary to cope with the normal world. They have only related to a space of restriction and isolation. They could be terrified of the bombardment of their senses and the demands of their adaptation to the cacophony of the modern world. In my opinion, it will be a very difficult challenge and they will need every assistance of medicine, psychology, education and socialization for them to cope.

© Richmond Hill Psychology • 111 Hoddle St, Richmond, Vic 3121 Tel: 03 9419 3010 • Fax: 03 9429 7822 •
drjan@drjanethall.com.au

You have received this eZine because you have subscribed or you have contacted Dr Janet Hall regarding her services. You can unsubscribe or change your subscription details below. Please feel free to forward this eZine - in full, with copyright, contact, and creation information intact - without specific permission, to anyone you feel would be interested or may benefit. Dr Janet Hall's email list is not supplied to anyone. It is only used to mail this eZine.

This newsletter and its contents are copyright © 2007 by Dr Janet Hall. All rights reserved. No part may be reproduced in any form, without explicit written permission from Dr Janet Hall.
