



James Tobin, Ph.D.
15615 Alton Parkway | Suite 450
Irvine, CA 92618
(949) 338-4388
www.jamestobinphd.com

Psychotherapy
Couples
Parent Guidance
Buddhist Psychology and Mindfulness
Executive Coaching

Group Seminar Audio Series

Fathering Throughout the Son's Life: The "Good Enough" Father

A renowned author, psychoanalyst, and expert on male psychology, Michael Diamond has published an intriguing paper and book that describe his notion of the "good enough" father. The character and ingredients of the "good enough" mother, originally conceived by the British psychoanalyst D.W. Winnicott, have been widely discussed but a similar perspective has not been applied to fathers until Diamond. Diamond's characterization of the successful father is organized into 12 key role functions that align to the unique challenges the son confronts as he develops. In this seminar, we discuss Diamond's ideas about the "good enough" father. *This seminar was recorded on February 2, 2019 in Laguna Hills, CA.*

Key Excerpts:

- *The "good enough" mother concept is a theory about how the mother psychologically hangs in there with the child as the child moves through development toward separation/individuations. Michael Diamond comes along and applies the term "good enough" to the father. Diamond describes 12 functions or roles the father plays as the son experiences his development from birth to middle adulthood.*
- *According to Diamond, the initial role the father plays is to provide a "holding environment" for the mother and son that encourages and supports the mother-son attachment bond.*
- *Diamond proposes four separation/individuation events in development. The first occurs when the son is around 6 months of age, a time when father emerges as an alternate attachment figure to mother and represents an "exciting second other" with whom the son may bond.*

Fathering Throughout the Son's Life: The “Good Enough” Father

Key Excerpts (continued)

- *Later in the son's development, Diamond argues that the father modulates the son's aggression and heated emotion.*
- *During the Oedipal period, the son psychologically “gives up” mother and starts to become attached to father as a male role model who escorts the son into healthy masculinity.*
- *In middle childhood, Diamond argues that the father “initiates and mentors instrumental, expressive masculinity as well as group relations.” The father is a mentor and teacher for the son.*
- *As the son moves through adolescence, the father supports the son's second individuation.*
- *Diamond describes how the adolescent son pursues substitute father figures who are likely very different from the father. This was the main theme of the play and film, “The Bronx Tale.”*
- *As the son moves into young and middle adulthood, Diamond indicates that the third separation/individuation process occurs. At this time the father's role, for Diamond, is to provide recognition of and respect for the adult son's “autonomy and achievements while relinquishing attempts to exert earlier forms of parental control.”*