

# BrokenFathers/BrokenSons Psychoanalyst Remembers

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## BOOK REVIEW

By Robert Quackenbush

Without question, these early visual impressions are very real to the author and to the reader. I could visualize him as a boy cleaning house and trying to prepare a simple meal to help his mother and my heart ached for that boy. At last his mother's energy and spirit were restored when she entered her mid-forties. Then his father wanted a daughter and his parents adopted a four-year-old from a foundling home who had been shunted from foster home to foster home, never having a firm hold on a mother's love. Gargiulo, the boy could identify with the girl's lost and lonely state of being from which she never fully recovered.

At age seventeen, young Gargiulo sought a new home with the Carmelite religious order and decided on priesthood. "I was promised a protective loving father in God and a reliable mother in the Church," he writes. Ten years went by and he began to question some of the teachings of the Church and his motivations for becoming a priest. Consequently two weeks before his ordination he left the order. He went on to teach courses in religion at a community college. He married and soon became a father. While he was teaching full time he enrolled at NPAP for psychoanalytic training. His description of the initiative and energy it takes to become a psychoanalyst while being a family man and holding down a full-time job is a superbly written account that every analyst-in-training can recognize.

Toward the end of his moving memoir Gargiulo makes peace with his father. His book calls for a sequel told with the same depth and insight about how he resolved his emotional conflicts over his mother and his relationship with her during his first five years of life. Then, I believe, as he has asked, his analysis will be complete and he will be able to tell us if he was merely making the journey his own.

### BROKEN FATHERS/BROKEN SONS:

A Psychoanalyst Remembers

by Gerald J. Gargiulo

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It has often been said in the psychoanalytic community that we are constantly rewriting the traumas of our children in our unconscious minds to emotionally adjust to what we can tolerate about our recollections. Did the events happen in the same way our memories tell us?

Gerald J. Gargiulo asks a similar question in his memoir *Broken Fathers/Broken Sons*. "Why have I written of this journey?" he asks. "Am I, in writing it, completing my analysis, or after all these years, merely making the journey my own?"

Personally I have often wondered about that. Some of the memories from my childhood are visuals that never change. They are as clear to me as the day they happened. Perhaps that is because I am a professional artist as well as a psychoanalyst.

Gerald J. Gargiulo's memoir is like that. He writes visually. The reader never doubts his telling of the childhood traumas he experienced from a verbally abusive father who threw tirades at the dinner table whenever the dinner was not prepared the way he wanted it. He also writes with great sensitivity about how his mother's crash into severe depression and wine addiction from his father's domination led to her having 18 electric shock treatments.

