



Presentation



'When a caterpillar is about to become a butterfly it goes through a truly hard time'. With these words a grandmother tried to console her thirteen years old niece who was going through a difficult period in her life: puberty.

For a period of time which goes from middle school until the end of high school, a deep process of renegotiation of the adolescent way of being occur and this brings about a deep tension between the wish to change and the opposite thrust to maintain the previous way of relating to oneself and to others. The grandmother's metaphor expresses a synthesis of the various unavoidable changes which occur during puberty. The world is no longer the one he/she knew and it will not be the same anymore.

This complex set of changes generate deep fears and anxieties which the adolescent tries to deal with by setting up defence strategies against the sense of powerlessness and inadequacy. The book addresses the meaning of this moment of crisis at puberty and adolescence and the choice of defensive strategies: a particular symptom, isolation, self harm, eating disorders or delinquent behaviour aimed at maintaining a relative sense of security. The book could be also titled 'Adolescents and parents in crisis' because these phases of pain and suffering which the adolescent goes through do have a strong impact on the emotional state of the parents and on the equilibrium of the whole family. This volume wants to propose a reflection from a psychoanalytical perspective on these moments of crisis and on how to help parents, teachers, professionals to give them a meaning and deal with them.

Emanuela Quagliata

Virginia Ungar - Adolescence: the pain of belonging or not belonging

Egle Laufer - On developmental breakdown: a conversation with Eglé Laufer by Emanuela Quagliata

Robin Anderson - Risk of self harm and suicide in adolescence

Donald Campbell - Assessing delinquency in adolescence

Roberta Mondadori, Gianna Williams - Reflections on eating disorders in adolescence

Kerry and Jack Novick - Work with parents of adolescent patients