Dissatisfaction with psychotherapy, its frequent disruptive effects on social relationships, and the failure of therapeutic gains to survive into natural environments were issues which led me through several years work in natural-group treatments, such as marriage and family therapy, and the therapeutic community. When Ralph Wetzel, who had been trained at the University of Washington, which was a seedbed of the behaviorist movement, became my colleague at Arizona, we joined forces and theories.

Wetzel was himself dissatisfied with the state of behavior modification, largely limited then to institutional applications. Then, as now, behavior improvements did not seem to generalize to environments or relationships beyond the one of treatment. We reasoned that prosocial behavior would be maintained only if the natural environments of children—their families and schools—could be altered to support the desired behavior. Therefore the actual targets of behavior change must be the parents, teachers, siblings, aunts, etc., of referred problem children.

The application of behavior modification procedures by significant adults in the families and schools of problem children is suggested and exemplified; also, a theory is developed. Outcome data are presented. [The Science Citation Index® (SCI®) and the Social Sciences Citation Index® (SSCI®) indicate that this book has been cited over 240 times since 1969.]