

*Intimate Relationships,
Marriages,
& Families*

Fourth Edition



F. PHILIP RICE

Intimate Relationships, Marriages, and Families

Fourth Edition

F. Philip Rice

University of Maine



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To
Irma Ann Rice
with deepest love

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Preface

The desire for intimacy is a universal need of human beings. Almost all adult men and women seek to marry or form a permanent stable relationship with another person. Most people will want to bear children and raise a family in a secure, loving, and fulfilling environment.

The real question each human being faces is, How do I create such relationships? This book was written to help you understand how intimate relationships are formed and maintained, and why they sometimes fail. Throughout the discussion, the focus is on motivation and commitment, on diversity and individual choice, and on our capacity to understand, grow, and change.

FIVE THEMES

Five major themes serve to organize the content and emphasis in this book:

Cognition—developing knowledge and understanding

Change—personal growth

Challenge—being motivated

Choice—making wise decisions

Commitment—the importance of dedication

Each of us has a tremendous capacity to grow and change, but to grow and change in ways that are best for us, we need a cognitive understanding of what is involved, what choices we have, and what the consequences of these choices may be. It is here that the information provided by the social and behavioral sciences can help. For instance, we

know more about the biology of sex and reproduction than ever before, and such knowledge can contribute immeasurably to a successful marriage.

As we grow in knowledge, we may also grow in other ways, especially in objectivity and tolerance for others. The more we study intimate relationships, marriages, and family patterns, the more we see that no one way can be considered the “right way” or the ideal for everyone. We also can grow by examining and clarifying our personal attitudes and values directly. We can grow in our ability to love, to express warmth and affection, and to show empathy with others. Also, we can develop social skills and seek friendships that fulfill us and enrich our lives. We can learn to resolve interpersonal conflicts. Throughout this book we focus on these various dimensions of growth.

One of the questions most frequently asked of a therapist or counselor is, Do you believe people ever really change? The conclusion of experts and researchers is that we do change. And although we can't expect to change others and probably shouldn't try, we can change ourselves. We can change if we want to, and sometimes we must change if we are to grow in ways that are healthy for us. Obviously, such change is more likely to be fruitful if it is the result of informed choice based on sound knowledge.

This book gives particular attention to changes that occur over the life cycle. Life is not static, and neither are intimate relationships. People change, situations change, relationships change. The love we may feel today may not be exactly the same as the love we feel ten years from now. However,

there is also continuity to life; what happens now greatly influences tomorrow. And there is similarity as well as diversity in the ways humans develop and cope with events. To show students how others have responded to change and how those responses have affected the quality of their intimate relationships is an important aim of this book.

Life involves many choices. Shall I marry or remain single? What should I look for in a mate? What are my priorities in life? Do I want marriage, a career, or both? Do I want children? If I cannot have children of my own, is adoption a desirable choice? How do I raise a child? If I find myself in a troubled marriage or other relationship, do I choose to end it or try to save it? How does one choose a counselor? If divorced, will I choose to marry again? What should my relationship be with my parents, and what is the best way to help them if they cannot help themselves? One purpose of this book is to challenge and motivate readers to commit themselves to finding their own individual answers to such questions as these and to make wise choices in the light of realistic expectations.

ORGANIZATION AND CONTENT

Part I, Social and Psychological Perspectives, places our study in social and historical context by characterizing the changes that have taken place in marriage and family during the 20th century (Chapter 1); by examining class ethnic and cultural differences in families (Chapter 2); and by showing how our family backgrounds influence our attitudes toward the other sex, gender roles, intimacy, children, marriage and divorce, family values, work habits, and interpersonal communication (Chapter 3).

Part II (Chapters 4–9) focuses on the nature of intimate relationships, exploring such questions as these: What factors are important in attraction? What are the purposes and problems of dating, and how can dating be not only enjoyable but a

means of personal growth and mate sorting? How do you know when you're in love, and is being in love a valid criteria for marriage? How do people express their sexual and intimate needs? How does one find a partner and know if the partner is really the right one? What are the implications of remaining single or of seeking a marriage partner? What effect does living together before marriage have on marital success? How can we successfully make the transition to marriage?

Marriage brings with it a new set of demands for growth and change. Part III considers first the qualities essential to healthy intimate relationships and marital success (Chapter 10) and then discusses the changes that take place in marriage and family relationships over the family life cycle (Chapter 11). The remaining chapters (12–14) explore work and family roles and the management of material resources; companionship within and outside the family; and power, decision making, and communication.

In Part IV the presentation shifts from an emphasis on couples to a focus on the family as a unit. Chapter 15 discusses the decisions involved in parenthood and family planning, and Chapter 16 follows the birth process from conception through pregnancy and the preparations made by the family for a new baby. A separate chapter (17) on parent-child relationships is followed by Chapter 18 on extended family relationships, a subject of increasing interest to students of the family.

Most families experience some conflict and face periods of crisis. Part V explores constructive versus destructive conflict, the management of a variety of crises, and seeking help. Chapters 20 and 21 discuss alternatives to divorce, how to minimize the harmful effects of divorce, and the special challenges of remarriage and step-parenting.

SPECIAL FEATURES

Several features distinguish *Intimate Relationships, Marriages, and Families* from other textbooks.

As students become aware of the remarkable range of individual and cultural differences in human relationships, they gain not only in tolerance for others but also in control over their own lives; yet few textbooks devote much attention to such diversity. This book emphasizes diversity from the outset, especially in Chapter 2, but also throughout all of the chapters—in discussions and examples and in the sequences of illustrations.

Though concrete and thoroughly practical in its aims, the book gives students a sound research base for the information it offers. Information from over 1600 research references has been incorporated into the body of the text; nearly 300 new references have been added to replace older references that have been deleted.

Another important feature of the book is its emphasis on understanding ourselves by examining our family backgrounds. The roles we enact and the ideas, attitudes, feelings, and values that we hold are learned—primarily from our own family experiences as we grow up, secondarily from social experiences with friends and groups and in activities outside the home. This book stimulates and assists the student in exploring these influences.

New information is most meaningful to students when it is placed within the context of the personal narrative, the case study, the carefully chosen excerpt from a client interview. This book offers students the benefit of many real experiences drawn from the notes of counselors and therapists, including the author. Although the details have been altered to protect the anonymity of clients, the described experiences are real and meaningful.

Two types of special-focus boxes appear throughout this book. *Perspective* boxes present interesting research findings or viewpoints related to the subjects under discussion. *Family Issues* boxes present important conditions, situations, or problems facing the family. Such current topics as lesbian couples and children, welfare and the family, psychological intimacy, AIDS and safer sex, caring for the elderly, women's empowerment,

and RU-486 (the "abortion pill") are covered in these boxes.

Pedagogical aids for the student include detailed outlines at the beginning of each chapter, key terms, a summary of important points at the end of each chapter, suggested readings, and a comprehensive glossary.

NEW TO THE FOURTH EDITION

For the fourth edition, all chapters were carefully revised and updated. Current research is incorporated in the text, and newly emerging topics and issues are discussed. The following list gives a sample of some of the new or expanded topics addressed in this edition:

- High risk sexual behavior among adolescents and the implications for teen pregnancy and HIV infection
- The feminization of poverty, challenges for single mothers, and father involvement with children
- Child-rearing practices and parenting styles in Mexican American families
- Teenage motherhood in Native American populations
- Strengths of Vietnamese American families and challenges they face in the United States
- Changing perceptions of singlehood and of single motherhood
- Changes in love attitudes across family life stages
- Changes in gender norms for women and in men's attitudes toward gender roles
- Multigenerational caregiving as a family stressor
- Challenges and effects of dual-parent employment
- Father involvement in child care and its effects on family relationships

- Effects of the computer revolution on children, adolescents, and the family
- The relationship between birth control pills and breast cancer
- Changes in adoption practices and effects on parents, children, and families
- Intergenerational relationships and the enduring mother-daughter bond
- Conflict, violence, and abuse in the family and their effects on children
- Children and divorce, coparenting, and parenting coalitions

ANCILLARY MATERIALS

This book is accompanied by a complete package of supplemental materials.

The Instructor's Manual includes learning objectives for each chapter; lecture outlines; teaching strategies; individual and classroom activities; and a list of key journals. A set of transparency masters that augment material in the textbook is available to instructors upon request.

The Test Bank, revised by Kenrick S. Thompson of Arkansas State University, Mountain Home, consists of over 1,500 items, including, for every chapter, true/false, multiple choice, matching, short-answer, and essay questions. It is available both in printed form and on computer disks for IBM-compatible and Macintosh computers. The computerized test bank allows the instructor to select, edit, and add questions, randomize them, keep a record of their use, and print tests (with an answer key) for individual classes.

The *Study Guide to Accompany Intimate Relationships, Marriages, and Families*, by Jeanne Kohl of the University of Washington, helps students to master and retain the concepts in each chapter of the textbook, prepare for examinations, assess their own personal attitudes and beliefs, and (through exercises) apply their knowledge to real-life situations.

Each chapter of the *Study Guide* has three parts. The first part contains learning objectives, a chapter summary, and a practice test. These components are designed to facilitate student mastery of the content. The types of questions in the Test Bank are also in the practice test.

The second part, the Personal Involvement Assessment, gives students the opportunity to examine in depth one of the important issues discussed or referred to in the textbook chapter and to apply the knowledge gained from the chapter to their own lives (for example, exploring personal stereotypes, testing their awareness of the consequences of AIDS, considering how they would react to a spouse's having extramarital affairs).

The final part of each chapter, Knowledge in Action, highlights key research studies on a specific topic from the textbook. Following a review of the topic, the section suggests a project or projects in which students apply what they have learned to "real-life" situations involving others. Examples of such projects are content analyses of sex roles found in the media, interviews with single parents and married couples about child-care arrangements, and surveys of youth attitudes about alcohol or marijuana use.

New to this edition is the *Mayfield Relationships and Intimacy Videotape*. The 13 segments on this videotape (each 5 to 15 minutes in length) were selected and edited to complement the topics covered in the text. They include such subjects as gender roles, interracial marriages, parenthood, the "sandwich generation," children of divorce, and stepparenting.

Also new to this edition is *Mayfield's Quick View Guide to the Internet for Intimate Relationships, Sexuality, Marriage, and Family*. Available free with the text, this guide includes tutorials on using the World Wide Web, how to find Web sites related to the study of relationships, family and gender, and how to use them. Throughout the guide, students are taken through the steps needed to find information on the Internet, including library resources, listservs, APA writing

guides, and more. Call Mayfield Publishing Company or contact your local sales representative for more information.

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