

# PSYCHOLOGY and the CHALLENGES of LIFE

Adjustment and Growth

Fourth Edition



SPENCER A. RATHUS

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JEFFREY S. NEVID



**Fourth Edition**

# **Psychology and the Challenges of Life**

## **Adjustment and Growth**

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Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.

New York Chicago San Francisco Philadelphia  
Montreal Toronto London Sydney Tokyo

■ *To Jill Rathus, as she undertakes graduate  
study in psychology*

*To Eleanor and Marvin Nevid*

PUBLISHER *Susan Driscoll*  
ACQUISITIONS EDITOR *Eve Howard*  
DEVELOPMENTAL EDITOR *Carol Einhorn*  
SENIOR PROJECT MANAGER *Françoise Bartlett*  
MANAGER OF PRODUCTION *Angelo Puleo*  
DESIGN SUPERVISOR *Lou Scardino*  
TEXT DESIGN *Caliber Design Planning, Inc.*  
COVER PHOTOS Front cover: © 1987 *Neil Rabinowitz*  
Back cover: *I. Thoma/The Image Bank*  
COVER DESIGN *Fred Pusterla*

**Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Rathus, Spencer A.

Psychology and the challenges of life.

Rev. ed. of: *Adjustment and growth*. 3rd ed. c1986.

Includes indexes.

Bibliography: p.

1. Adjustment (Psychology) 2. Psychology.

I. Nevid, Jeffrey S. II. Rathus, Spencer A.

*Adjustment and growth*. III. Title.

BF335.R28 1989 155.2'4 88-13457

ISBN 0-03-025464-7

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Printed in the United States of America

9 0 1 2 089 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Holt Rinehart and Winston, Inc.  
The Dryden Press  
Saunders College Publishing

Copyright acknowledgments and photo credits follow References.



# ■ Preface

Writing *Psychology and the Challenges of Life* was one of the major challenges of our professional careers: describing the theories and methods of the science of psychology and showing how they have revolutionized our abilities to cope with the demands of contemporary life.

To meet our challenge, we decided that the text must be comprehensive, efficient, and balanced. It was written for instructors who require a textbook that is

Comprehensive and balanced  
Rigorous and up-to-date  
Easily read  
Interest arousing  
Well-illustrated  
Theoretical and applied.

Specifically, *Psychology and the Challenges of Life* balances the following elements:

**Information and Applications** Psychological theory and research now extend to elements of our daily lives ranging from doing well in college to adjustment in a new job, from weight control to safe(r) sex in the age of AIDS, from figuring out what to say in social encounters to the quests for values and personal identity. With these issues and others, we report the pertinent psychological theory and research, and then we show readers how to apply theory and research to their own lives.

But a responsible textbook must avoid giving readers the impression that they can handle major psychological problems by themselves. For this reason, we also point out when it is useful to consult a helping professional, and we suggest who the right professional for the problem may be.

### **Traditional and Innovative Areas in Adjustment**

This book discusses the areas found in most psychology of adjustment textbooks, such as stress, sex roles, adult development, marriage, work, anxiety, and prejudice. But it also focuses on areas that have become of major concern to today's readers, but which are found less often in textbooks, or not at all. These innovative areas include student success ("How to Take Charge in College"), alcohol and drug abuse, rape and rape prevention, sexual dysfunctions, aging, job hunting (including using a "job finders' club"), enhancing productivity at work, career decision making, coping with sexual

harrassment and sexism, and having and rearing children.

**Psychodynamic, Trait, Learning, and Phenomenological Personality Theories** A comprehensive psychology of adjustment textbook cannot be written from a single theoretical perspective. The issues dealt with are too broad to be fully encompassed by one approach. Therefore, we point out how each of the four major psychological approaches to understanding human nature has provided helpful information for personal development. However, we are not naively eclectic; each of these views has shortcomings as well as strengths, and we point them out, as appropriate.

**Substance and Readability** It matters little how fine the substance of a textbook is if its style fails to make it accessible to students. Feedback from students and instructors concerning the first three editions suggested that we were highly successful in our efforts to craft every word with the student in mind. Students and instructors appreciated our orderly development of concepts and our interjection of humor. They requested that we maintain our writing style for the fourth edition.

We did.

However, the substance of the current edition has been expanded. We have changed the title of the book to signal this change. The previous edition, entitled *Adjustment and Growth*, suggested that the applications to everyday life take precedence over other considerations. The current edition is entitled *Psychology and the Challenges of Life*, suggesting that psychology is discussed as the rigorous science it is, and that applications are logically derived and empirically based.

Note the following changes in substance.

### ■ What's New in This Edition

The current edition is divided into three parts.

#### **Part I: Psychological Foundations of Adjustment and Growth**

The first part discusses psychology as the science that helps people adjust to the challenges of life and develop as individuals.

Chapter 1, "Psychology and the Challenges of Life." This chapter defines psychology as a science and relates psychology to adjustment

and growth. There is a new section on issues in psychology and adjustment, an expanded section on research methods ("How Psychologists Study Adjustment"), and an expanded section on "Student Success: How to Take Charge in College," which addresses ways of planning time, using the SQ4R study method, and of behaving in class.

**Chapter 2, "Theories of Personality and Behavior."**

This chapter explores the four major contemporary approaches to personality. There are new sections on trait theory and George Kelly. The section on social-learning theory is completely revised. The strengths and weaknesses of each approach are evaluated, and the nature of the healthy personality is discussed in terms of each approach.

**Chapter 3, "Sex Roles and Sex Differences."**

This chapter explores sex roles and sex differences in personality and behavior. The section on development of sex differences is expanded to include cognitive-developmental theory and gender-schema theory. There is also a new section on the costs of sex-role stereotyping.

**Chapter 4, "Person Perception: How We See Others and Ourselves."**

This chapter explores the contributions of the psychology of person perception to the ways in which we perceive other people and ourselves. There are new sections on social perception, including schema theory, primacy and recency effects, body language, and attribution theory.

**Chapter 5, "Social Influence: Being Influenced**

**By—and Influencing—Others."** This chapter explores the contributions of the psychology of social influence to our understanding of the ways in which we and other people attempt to have an impact on each other's behavior.

**Part II: Stress, Health, and Coping**

The second part explores the links among stress, health, and psychological disorders. Ways of coping are described in step-by-step fashion.

**Chapter 6, "Stress: What It Is and What It Does."**

There is expanded coverage of daily hassles and of the stress-related responses of the sympathetic and endocrine systems. There is new coverage of emotional and cognitive responses to stress, and of moderators of the impact of stress—including the roles of self-efficacy expectancies, psychological hardiness, humor, goal-directedness, predictability, and social support.

**Chapter 7, "Psychology and Physical Health."** This new chapter covers health psychology—the immune system; the links between stress and physical disorders such as headaches, cardiovascular disorders, and cancer; nutritional patterns (including the roles of fats, vitamins, fiber, and so on in cardiovascular disorders and cancer); activity patterns (for example, the health benefits of exercise); and the psychology of being sick (including factors involved in seeking and complying with medical advice, the conceptualization of illness, and the sick role).

**Chapter 8, "Psychological Disorders."** There is new coverage of panic disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, depersonalization, anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and sexual disorders. The chapter is written from the contemporary perspective of the DMS-III-R, and coverage of etiology is rigorous.

**Chapter 9, "Therapies: Ways of Helping."** Coverage is generally expanded, especially in the cognitive and biological therapies. There is a rigorous new evaluation of methods of therapy.

**Chapter 10, "Active Coping: Ways of Helping Ourselves."** This new chapter covers ways of reducing arousal, controlling catastrophizing thoughts, and coping with issues in self-control (weight, smoking, insomnia) and the emotions (anxiety, depression, anger). There is new coverage of methods of alleviating Type A behavior and of enhancing psychological hardiness.

**Part III: Adult Life in a Changing World**

The third part discusses the challenges that face adults as they develop in a changing world.

**Chapter 11, "Adult Development: Passages."**

There is new material on the physical and cognitive changes that occur during adulthood and on dying with dignity (the hospice movement, euthanasia, and the living will). Coverage of developmental theory is broadened and deepened.

**Chapter 12, "The Challenge of the Workplace."**

Coverage of Super's theory of career development is expanded. There is new coverage of coping styles and vocational types (Holland's theory of career selection), developmental tasks in a new job, cognitive biases in worker appraisal, and organizational theory and adjustment.

**Chapter 13, "Interpersonal Attraction: Of Friendship, Love, and Loneliness."** There is new coverage of friendship and loneliness.

Chapter 14, "Communication and Intimate Relationships: A Guide on How to Get from Here to There." There is new coverage of stages in a relationship and a new, step-by-step guide to enhancing communication skills.

Chapter 15, "Sexual Behavior: Perspectives, Patterns, Pleasures, and Problems." The discussion of contemporary sexual behavior is fully updated to reflect the relatively conservative trends of the late 1980s. There is a new section on sexually transmitted diseases and a section of concrete advice on "Safe(r) Sex in the Age of AIDS."

Chapter 16, "Having and Rearing Children." There is new material of concern to young adults considering having families: coping with infertility, environmental influences on embryonic and fetal development, methods of childbirth, authoritative child-rearing, breast-feeding, child abuse, and day care.

## ■ Pedagogical Aids and Features

Most students who take the psychology of adjustment are first- and second-year students. Many of them have not had an introductory course in psychology. We included a number of pedagogical aids and features to help promote learning among students who have little or no background in psychology:

### Chapter Outlines

Each chapter opens with a clear chapter outline. Chapter outlines provide students with "advance organizers"—expectations about what is to come that help them integrate the subject matter.

### "Truth or Fiction?"

Following the chapter outline is a "Truth or Fiction?" section that stimulates students by challenging folklore and common knowledge. The "Truth or Fiction?" items prompt students to seek the answers within the chapters.

### Running Glossary

Research has shown that most students do not take full advantage of a glossary that is tucked away near the end of a book. For this reason, we define key terms in a running glossary that appears in the margins of the two-page spreads on which the terms appear. Thus they are immediately accessible; students need not interrupt their train of thought to go searching at the back of the book.

Key terms are made immediately evident by appearing in boldface type in the text. All defined terms are also listed in the subject index, and the pages on which they are defined are also boldfaced, increasing the accessibility of the definitions.

### "A Closer Look" Inserts

These inserts are found throughout the text. Some of them provide humorous asides. Others provide in-depth discussions of important studies or of applications. Examples include:

- Coping with self-help books
- Why young people join religious cults
- Pain management
- Myths about menopause
- Workaholism
- Sexual harassment on the job.

### "What Do You Say Now?" Inserts

We are particularly proud of this new feature. Each "What Do You Say Now?" section paints a challenging social situation and asks students to write down what they would say in it. Then we present some of our own suggestions, allowing students to compare their thinking with ours. These situations are real and occur quite commonly. We believe that these exercises will help students respond to them—and to similar situations—effectively in their own lives. Examples include:

- Handling a sexist remark
- Resisting a relative's invitation to eat a fattening dessert
- How to make a positive impression at a job interview
- Making sex safe(r) in the age of AIDS
- Selecting an obstetrician
- Selecting a day-care center.

### Questionnaires

Questionnaires included throughout the book will further stimulate student interest and also help them satisfy their curiosities about their motives, attitudes, and certain personality traits. For instance, students can gain insight into why they drink or find out how assertive they are as compared to a national sample of college students. They can learn whether or not their expectations of their marriage partners are likely to be highly traditional, and whether or not their views of sex roles are traditional.

Moreover, the presence of questionnaires actually used by psychologists will provide students with additional insight into how psychologists conceptualize research variables and gather data.

### Chapter Summaries

End-of-chapter summaries are written in question-and-answer format so as to be consistent with the SQ4R study method outlined in Chapter 1. These summaries help students actively review the subject matter by posing questions and then suggesting answers.

**“Truth or Fiction Revisited” Sections**

These sections follow the chapter summaries and provide answers to the provocative issues raised at the beginning of the chapter. They also help provide a sense of psychological closure.

**Answer Keys to Questionnaires**

The answer keys to the questionnaires are placed at the ends of the chapters in which they appear.

**Section on “Student Success: How to Take Charge in College”**

Chapter 1 includes a section that explains the SQ4R for actively learning textbook material. It is intended to be of help to students not only in their psychology of adjustment course but also throughout their college careers. Other study hints explain the advantages of building study habits, planning ahead, distributing learning, and using other well-documented study techniques.

**■ The Ancillaries**

*Psychology and the Challenges of Life* is accompanied by a student Study Guide, an Instructor's Manual/Test Bank, and Computerized Test Item Files, which are intended to optimize learning and teaching.

**Study Guide**

The Study Guide is designed to make it easier for students to organize the material in each chapter of the text so that they can learn and remember it more efficiently. Each chapter of the Study Guide contains an Outline, Learning Objectives, Key Terms, and a Self-test section including 25 multi-

ple-choice items. An introductory section provides a detailed presentation of study techniques.

**Instructor's Manual/Test Bank**

For each chapter of the text, the Instructor's Manual provides an Outline, Teaching Objectives, Lecture and Class Activity Suggestions, and Film Suggestions. An introduction explains how best to use these resources.

The Test Bank contains at least 100 multiple-choice test items for each chapter. The questions are designed in part to test knowledge and in part to test students' ability to apply information from the text. The 25 multiple-choice questions in each chapter of the Study Guide are also included in the Test Bank, keyed in the margins for easy recognition. Instructors may choose to include these questions in their exams to reward student review work.

**Computerized Test Item Files**

Computerized Test Item Files are available for use on the Apple and IBM personal computerized systems.

**■ Acknowledgments**

At times writing can seem like a solitary task. However, many people participated in the growth and development of *Psychology and the Challenges of Life*. We take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to them. First, we must thank our professional colleagues from campuses all across the nation. They painstakingly read the manuscripts for each edition of the textbook and suggested many insightful adjustments. They are:

Bob Arndt  
*Delta College*

Bela Baker  
*University of Wisconsin—Green Bay*

Helene Bakewell  
*Stephen F. Austin State University*

Jacinth Baubitz  
*Northwood Institute*

Nancy Bowers  
*Pikes Peak Community College*

Desmond Cartwright  
*University of Colorado*

David Chance  
*Central State College*

Norma Crews  
*DeKalb Community College*

Jean DeVany  
*Auburn University*

Richard Dienstbier  
*University of Nebraska*

Steve Donahue  
*Grand Canyon College*

William Dugmore  
*Central Washington University*

Thomas Eckle  
*Modesto Junior College*

Richard M. Ehlenz  
*Rochester Community College*

Ron Evans  
*Washburn University*

Jennie Fauchier  
*Metro Technical Community College*

Eugene Fichter  
*Northern Virginia Community College*

Ronnie Fisher  
*Miami-Dade Community College*

Sharon Fisher  
*El Paso Community College*

Lynn Godat  
*Portland Community College*

Peter Gram  
*Pensacola Community College*

Lawrence Grebstein  
*University of Rhode Island*

Myree Hayes  
*East Carolina University*

Gladys Hiner  
*Rose State College*

Gordon M. Kimbrell <i>University of South Carolina</i>	Patrick Murphy <i>Spokane Community College</i>	James B. Riley <i>Southeastern Massachusetts University</i>
Clint Layne <i>Western Kentucky University</i>	Tony Obradovich <i>DeVry Institute of Technology</i>	Suzanne Rucker <i>Miami-Dade Community College</i>
Gary Lesniak <i>Portland Community College</i>	Arne Parma <i>Massachusetts Bay Community College</i>	Claudia Sowa <i>University of Virginia</i>
Arnold LeUnes <i>Texas A&amp;M University</i>	Kathy Petrowsky <i>Southwestern Oklahoma State University</i>	Arthur Swanson <i>University of Missouri—Columbia</i>
Phyllis McGraw <i>Portland State University</i>	Robert Petty <i>University of Santa Clara</i>	Marilyn Thomas <i>Prince George Community College</i>
Louis A. Martone <i>Miami-Dade Community College</i>	A. R. Peyman <i>Mississippi State University</i>	Robert Thomlinson <i>University of Wisconsin—Eau Claire</i>
Frederick Medway <i>University of South Carolina</i>	Gary Piggrem <i>DeVry Institute of Technology</i>	Deborah Weber <i>University of Akron</i>
Roland Miller <i>Sam Houston State University</i>	Chris Potter <i>Harrisburg Area Community College</i>	David Weight <i>Brigham Young University</i>
Norma Mittenthal <i>Hillsborough Community College</i>	Jay Pozner <i>Jackson Community College</i>	Robert Wrenn <i>University of Arizona</i>

We also had the fortune to work with the first-rate staff of publishing professionals at Holt, Rinehart and Winston. We thank Susan Driscoll, Publisher of the Behavioral and Social Sciences group, for her support and encouragement as we deepened the substance and expanded the coverage of the book. Eve Howard, Psychology Editor, was persuaded to surrender the wonders of the Bay Area to move back East and lend this book her expertise. Carol Einhorn, Developmental Editor, made innumerable valuable suggestions for fine-tuning the substance of the manuscript and for finding new ways to make psychology accessible to

students. Lou Scardino, Design Supervisor, is to be credited for the attractive design. Fran Bartlett, Senior Project Manager, once again worked her magic on one of our manuscripts—somehow converting it into the beautiful book you are now holding in your hands. Angelo Puleo, Manager of Production, ably oversaw the book's production.

S.A.R.  
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New York, N.Y.



# **Brief Contents**

## **Part I Psychological Foundations of Adjustment and Growth 1**

1. Psychology and the Challenges of Life 2
2. Theories of Personality and Behavior 36
3. Sex Roles and Sex Differences 78
4. Person Perception: How We See Others and  
Ourselves 116
5. Social Influence: Being Influenced by—and Influencing—  
Others 148

## **Part II Stress, Health, and Coping 179**

6. Stress: What It Is and What It Does 180
7. Psychology and Physical Health 230
8. Psychological Disorders 274
9. Therapies: Ways of Helping 308
10. Active Coping: Ways of Helping Ourselves 348

## **Part III Adult Life in a Changing World 395**

11. Adult Development: Passages 396
12. The Challenge of the Workplace 424
13. Interpersonal Attraction: Of Friendship, Love, and  
Loneliness 458
14. Communication and Intimate Relationships: A Guide on  
How to Get from Here to There 488
15. Sexual Behavior: Perspectives, Patterns, Pleasures, and  
Problems 520
16. Having and Rearing Children 558
- References R-1

# Contents

Preface iii

## PART I

### Psychological Foundations of Adjustment and Growth 1

#### 1. PSYCHOLOGY AND THE CHALLENGES OF LIFE 2

Truth or Fiction?	3
The Challenges of Life	5
The Challenge of Changing Roles	6
The Challenge of Changing Technology	6
The Challenge of a Changing Physical Environment	7
The Challenge of a Changing Society	8
Psychology and Adjustment	10
What Psychology Is	10
What Adjustment Is	11
How Psychologists View Adjustment	11
The Psychodynamic Perspective	12
The Trait-Theory Perspective	12
Learning-Theory Perspectives	12
Phenomenological Perspectives	13
Issues in Psychology and Adjustment	14
Adjustment versus Personal Growth	14
Nature versus Nurture: Is Biology Destiny?	15
The Clinical Approach versus the Healthy-Personality Approach	16
How Psychologists Study Adjustment	17
The Scientific Method	17
The Naturalistic-Observation Method	18
The Correlational Method	18
The Experimental Method	19
The Survey Method	23
The Testing Method	24
The Case-Study Method	24
Student Success: How to Take Charge in College	25
Taking an Active Approach to Learning—We Don't Really "Soak Up" Knowledge	25

SQ4R: Survey, Question, Read, Write, Recite, and Review	29
Ways to Frustrate Instructors and Jeopardize Progress in Class	30

Summary	32
Truth or Fiction Revisited	33

#### 2. THEORIES OF PERSONALITY AND BEHAVIOR 36

Truth or Fiction?	37
Psychodynamic Theories	38
Sigmund Freud's Theory of Psychosexual Development	38
Other Psychodynamic Views	43
Strengths of Psychodynamic Approaches	46
Weaknesses of Psychodynamic Approaches	48
The Healthy Personality	48
Trait Theories	49
Surface and Source Traits	50
Introversion-Extraversion and Emotional Stability	51
Strengths of Trait-Theory Approaches	51
Weaknesses of Trait-Theory Approaches	52
The Healthy Personality	53
Learning Theories	54
Behaviorism	54
Classical Conditioning	55
Operant Conditioning	58
Social-Learning Theory	61
Strengths of Learning-Theory Approaches	65
Weaknesses of Learning-Theory Approaches	66
The Healthy Personality	66
Phenomenological Theories	67
Abraham Maslow and the Challenge of Self-Actualization	67
Carl Rogers' Self Theory	69
George Kelly's Psychology of Personal Constructs	70
Strengths of Phenomenological Approaches	72
Weaknesses of Phenomenological Approaches	72
The Healthy Personality	73



<b>Some Concluding Thoughts about Theories of Personality and Behavior</b>	<b>73</b>	
<b>Summary</b>	<b>75</b>	
<b>Truth or Fiction Revisited</b>	<b>76</b>	
 <b>3. SEX ROLES AND SEX DIFFERENCES</b>		<b>78</b>
<b>Truth or Fiction?</b>	<b>79</b>	
<b>Sex Roles and Stereotypes</b>	<b>80</b>	
<b>Sexism</b>	<b>81</b>	
<i>School Days, School Days—Dear Old Sexist School Days?</i>	<b>83</b>	
<b>Sex Differences: Vive La Différence or Vive La Similarité?</b>	<b>84</b>	
<i>Differences of Cognitive Abilities</i>	<b>84</b>	
<i>Differences in Play and School Activities</i>	<b>86</b>	
<i>Differences in Aggressiveness</i>	<b>87</b>	
<i>Differences in Communication Styles: "He's Just an Old Chatterbox"</i>	<b>88</b>	
<b>On Becoming a Man or a Woman: Theoretical Views</b>	<b>88</b>	
<i>Biological Influences</i>	<b>89</b>	
<i>Psychodynamic Theory</i>	<b>90</b>	
<i>Social-Learning Theory</i>	<b>90</b>	
<i>Cognitive-Developmental Theory</i>	<b>94</b>	
<i>Gender-Schema Theory: An Information-Processing Approach</i>	<b>96</b>	
<b>Costs of Sex-Role Stereotyping</b>	<b>98</b>	
<i>Costs in Terms of Education</i>	<b>98</b>	
<i>Costs in Terms of Activities and Careers</i>	<b>99</b>	
<i>Costs in Terms of Psychological Well-Being and Interpersonal Relationships</i>	<b>102</b>	
<b>On the Adjustment of Working Wives and Their Children</b>	<b>103</b>	
<b>Adjustment and Psychological Androgyny: The More Traits the Merrier?</b>	<b>106</b>	
<b>Summary</b>	<b>111</b>	
<b>Truth or Fiction Revisited</b>	<b>113</b>	
 <b>4. PERSON PERCEPTION: HOW WE SEE OTHERS AND OURSELVES</b>		<b>116</b>
<b>Truth or Fiction?</b>	<b>117</b>	
<b>On Perception and Schemas: An Information-Processing Approach</b>	<b>118</b>	
<b>Perception of Others</b>	<b>119</b>	
<i>Primacy and Recency Effects: The Importance of First Impressions</i>	<b>119</b>	
<i>Body Language</i>	<b>120</b>	
<i>Prejudice</i>	<b>123</b>	
<b>Self-Perception</b>	<b>127</b>	
<i>The Self as a Guiding Principle of Personality</i>	<b>128</b>	
<i>The Parts of the Self</i>	<b>128</b>	
<i>Aspects of the Self-Schema: Names, Values, and Self-Concept</i>	<b>130</b>	
<i>Enhancing Self-Esteem</i>	<b>139</b>	
<b>Attribution Theory</b>	<b>140</b>	
<i>Dispositional and Situational Attributions</i>	<b>140</b>	
<i>The Fundamental Attribution Error</i>	<b>141</b>	
<i>The Actor-Observer Effect</i>	<b>141</b>	
<i>The Self-Serving Bias</i>	<b>142</b>	
<i>Attribution Theory and Conflict Resolution: Seeing Where the Other Person Is "Coming From"</i>	<b>142</b>	
<b>Summary</b>	<b>144</b>	
<b>Truth or Fiction Revisited</b>	<b>145</b>	
 <b>5. SOCIAL INFLUENCE: BEING INFLUENCED BY—AND INFLUENCING—OTHERS</b>		<b>148</b>
<b>Truth or Fiction?</b>	<b>149</b>	
<b>Persuasion</b>	<b>150</b>	
<i>The Persuasive Message: Say What? Say How? Say How Often?</i>	<b>151</b>	
<i>The Persuasive Communicator: Whom Do You Trust?</i>	<b>152</b>	
<i>The Context of the Message: "Get 'Em in a Good Mood"</i>	<b>152</b>	
<i>The Persuaded Audience: Are You a Person Who Can't Say No?</i>	<b>153</b>	
<i>The Foot-in-the-Door Technique</i>	<b>153</b>	
<i>Low-Balling</i>	<b>153</b>	
<i>Cognitive-Dissonance Theory</i>	<b>154</b>	
<b>Obedience to Authority</b>	<b>158</b>	
<i>The Milgram Studies: Shocking Stuff at Yale</i>	<b>158</b>	
<i>On Truth at Yale</i>	<b>159</b>	
<i>On Deception at Yale</i>	<b>160</b>	
<i>The Big Question: Why?</i>	<b>161</b>	
<b>Group Behavior</b>	<b>162</b>	
<i>Mob Behavior and Deindividuation</i>	<b>162</b>	
<i>Conformity</i>	<b>163</b>	
<i>Helping Behavior and the Bystander Effect: Some Watch While Others Die</i>	<b>167</b>	
<b>Becoming an Assertive Person: How to Win Respect and Influence People</b>	<b>169</b>	
<i>Self-Monitoring: Following Yourself Around the Block</i>	<b>170</b>	
<i>Confronting Irrational Beliefs: Do Your Own Beliefs Lead to Nonassertive or Aggressive Behavior?</i>	<b>172</b>	
<i>Modeling: Creating the New (Well, Almost New) You</i>	<b>173</b>	
<i>Behavior Rehearsal: Practice Makes Much Better</i>	<b>174</b>	
<b>Summary</b>	<b>175</b>	
<b>Truth or Fiction Revisited</b>	<b>177</b>	
 <b>PART II</b>		
<b>Stress, Health, and Coping</b>		<b>179</b>
 <b>6. STRESS: WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT DOES</b>		<b>180</b>
<b>Truth or Fiction?</b>	<b>181</b>	
<b>Sources of Stress</b>	<b>182</b>	

Daily Hassles	182
Life Changes: "Going Through Changes"	182
Criticisms of the Research Links Between Hassles, Life Changes, and Illness	186
Pain and Discomfort	188
Frustration	190
Conflict	193
Type A Behavior	196
Environmental Stressors	200
<b>Responses to Stress</b>	<b>206</b>
Physiological Responses	206
Emotional Responses	210
Cognitive Responses	211
Behavioral Responses to Stress: Ways of Coping	212
<b>Psychological Moderators of the Impact of Stress</b>	<b>216</b>
Self-Efficacy Expectancies	216
Psychological Hardiness	217
Sense of Humor: "Doeth a Merry Heart Good Like a Medicine?"	220
Goal-Directedness versus Playfulness	221
Predictability	221
Social Support	223
<b>Summary</b>	<b>225</b>
<b>Truth or Fiction Revisited</b>	<b>227</b>

<b>7. PSYCHOLOGY AND PHYSICAL HEALTH</b>	<b>230</b>
<b>Truth or Fiction?</b>	<b>231</b>
<b>Health Psychology</b>	<b>233</b>
<b>The Immune System</b>	<b>233</b>
Functions of the Immune System	233
Effects of Stress on the Immune System	234
<b>Physical Disorders and Stress</b>	<b>235</b>
Headaches	235
Hypertension	236
Cardiovascular Disorders	236
Ulcers	237
Asthma	237
Cancer	238
<b>Health-Related Behavior Patterns</b>	<b>240</b>
Substance Abuse and Dependence	240
Effects of Depressants	242
Effects of Stimulants	248
Effects of Hallucinogenics	252
Nutritional Patterns	254
Sleep Patterns	257
Activity Patterns: Run for Your Life?	260
<b>The Psychology of Being Sick</b>	<b>264</b>
Factors That Determine Willingness to Seek Health Care	265
Ways in Which We Conceptualize Illness	266
The Sick Role	266
Talking to the Doctor: Enhancing Physician-Patient Interactions	267
Complying with Medical Instructions and Procedures	268

<b>Summary</b>	<b>270</b>
<b>Truth or Fiction Revisited</b>	<b>272</b>
<b>8. PSYCHOLOGICAL DISORDERS</b>	<b>274</b>
<b>Truth or Fiction?</b>	<b>275</b>
<b>What Are Psychological Disorders?</b>	<b>276</b>
<b>Contemporary Models of Psychological Disorders</b>	<b>277</b>
The Medical Model	277
The Psychodynamic Model	278
The Social-Learning Model	278
The Cognitive Model	279
<b>Anxiety Disorders</b>	<b>280</b>
Phobias	280
Panic Disorder	281
Generalized Anxiety Disorder	281
Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder	281
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder	283
Theoretical Views	284
<b>Dissociative Disorders</b>	<b>285</b>
Psychogenic Amnesia	285
Psychogenic Fugue	285
Multiple Personality Disorder	285
Depersonalization Disorder	286
Theoretical Views	286
<b>Somatoform Disorders</b>	<b>286</b>
Conversion Disorder	286
Hypochondriasis	287
<b>Eating Disorders</b>	<b>288</b>
Anorexia Nervosa	288
Bulimia Nervosa	288
Theoretical Views	289
<b>Mood Disorders</b>	<b>290</b>
Major Depression	290
Bipolar Disorder	291
Theoretical Views	292
Suicide	294
<b>Schizophrenia</b>	<b>296</b>
Types of Schizophrenia	297
Theoretical Views	298
<b>Personality Disorders</b>	<b>299</b>
The Antisocial Personality	300
<b>Sexual Disorders</b>	<b>301</b>
Transsexualism	301
Paraphilias	302
<b>Summary</b>	<b>303</b>
<b>Truth or Fiction Revisited</b>	<b>305</b>

<b>9. THERAPIES: WAYS OF HELPING</b>	<b>308</b>
<b>Truth or Fiction?</b>	<b>309</b>
<b>Overview: What Is Therapy? Who Goes for Therapy?</b>	
Who Does Therapy?	310
Definitions and Clients	310
The Helping Professions	311
<b>Psychodynamic Therapies</b>	<b>312</b>



<i>Traditional Psychoanalysis: Where Id Was, There Shall Ego Be</i>	313
<i>Modern Psychodynamic Approaches</i>	316
<b>Phenomenological Therapies</b>	<b>316</b>
<i>Person-Centered Therapy: Removing Roadblocks to Self-Actualization</i>	316
<i>Transactional Analysis: Who's OK?</i>	318
<i>Gestalt Therapy: Getting It Together</i>	319
<i>Cognitive Therapies: "There Is Nothing Either Good or Bad, But Thinking Makes It So"</i>	320
<i>Albert Ellis's Rational-Emotive Therapy: Ten Doorways to Distress</i>	321
<i>Aaron Beck's Cognitive Therapy: Correcting Cognitive Errors</i>	324
<i>Cognitive Restructuring: "No, No, Look at It This Way"</i>	325
<i>Problem-Solving Training</i>	326
<b>Behavior Therapy: Adjustment Is What You Do</b>	<b>327</b>
<i>Systematic Desensitization</i>	328
<i>Aversive Conditioning</i>	329
<i>Operant Conditioning</i>	331
<i>Assertiveness Training</i>	331
<i>Self-Control Techniques</i>	332
<b>Group Therapy</b>	<b>334</b>
<i>Encounter Groups</i>	335
<i>Family Therapy</i>	335
<b>Evaluation of Methods of Psychotherapy</b>	<b>336</b>
<b>Biological Therapies</b>	<b>340</b>
<i>Chemotherapy</i>	340
<i>Electroconvulsive Therapy</i>	343
<i>Psychosurgery</i>	343
<i>Evaluation of Biological Therapies</i>	344
<b>Summary</b>	<b>344</b>
<b>Truth or Fiction Revisited</b>	<b>346</b>
 <b>10. ACTIVE COPING: WAYS OF HELPING OURSELVES</b>	 <b>348</b>
<b>Truth or Fiction?</b>	<b>349</b>
<b>Stress Management</b>	<b>350</b>
<b>Methods for Controlling Irrational and Catastrophizing Thoughts</b>	<b>350</b>
<i>Meichenbaum's Three Steps for Controlling Catastrophizing Thoughts</i>	351
<b>Methods for Lowering Arousal</b>	<b>352</b>
<i>Meditation</i>	352
<i>Biofeedback</i>	354
<i>Progressive Relaxation</i>	354
<i>Diaphragmatic Breathing</i>	358
<b>Methods for Coping with the Type A Behavior Pattern</b>	<b>358</b>
<i>Alleviating Your Sense of Time Urgency</i>	358
<i>Alleviating Your Hostility</i>	360
<i>Alleviating Your Self-Destructive Tendencies</i>	361
<b>Methods of Enhancing Psychological Hardiness</b>	<b>361</b>
<i>Situational Reconstruction: It's Not So Bad, But How Can You Make It Better?"</i>	362

<i>Focusing: "What's Really Bothering You?"</i>	362
<i>Compensatory Self-Improvement: "If Love Eludes You, Take Up Skiing?"</i>	362
<b>Methods for Controlling Weight</b>	<b>363</b>
<i>Improving Nutritional Knowledge</i>	363
<i>Decreasing Calorie Intake</i>	364
<i>Exercise</i>	365
<i>Behavior Modification</i>	365
<b>Methods for Quitting and Cutting Down Smoking</b>	<b>368</b>
<i>Suggestions for Quitting Cold Turkey</i>	368
<i>Suggestions for Cutting Down Gradually</i>	369
<b>Methods for Coping with Insomnia</b>	<b>369</b>
<i>Lowering Arousal</i>	370
<i>Challenging Irrational Beliefs</i>	370
<i>Using Fantasy</i>	370
<i>Using Stimulus Control</i>	371
<b>Methods for Coping with Emotional Responses to Stress</b>	<b>372</b>
<i>Coping with Fears and Phobias</i>	372
<i>Coping with Test Anxiety</i>	375
<i>Coping with Depression</i>	379
<i>Coping with Anger</i>	386
<b>Summary</b>	<b>392</b>
<b>Truth or Fiction Revisited</b>	<b>393</b>

## **PART III**

<b>Adult Life in a Changing World</b>	<b>395</b>
 <b>11. ADULT DEVELOPMENT: PASSAGES</b>	 <b>396</b>
<b>Truth or Fiction?</b>	<b>397</b>
<b>Young Adulthood</b>	<b>398</b>
<i>Physical Development</i>	398
<i>Cognitive Development</i>	398
<i>Personality Development and Adjustment</i>	399
<b>Middle Adulthood</b>	<b>403</b>
<i>Physical Development</i>	403
<i>Cognitive Development</i>	404
<i>Personality Development and Adjustment</i>	404
<b>Late Adulthood</b>	<b>408</b>
<i>Physical Development</i>	408
<i>Cognitive Development</i>	409
<i>Personality Development and Adjustment</i>	411
<b>On Death and Dying</b>	<b>415</b>
<i>Theoretical Perspectives</i>	415
<i>Dying with Dignity</i>	417
<i>The Funeral</i>	418
<i>Bereavement</i>	419
<i>"Lying Down to Pleasant Dreams . . ."</i>	419
<b>Summary</b>	<b>420</b>
<b>Truth or Fiction Revisited</b>	<b>421</b>
 <b>12. THE CHALLENGE OF THE WORKPLACE</b>	 <b>424</b>
<b>Truth or Fiction?</b>	<b>425</b>
<b>Seeking Self-Fulfillment in the Workplace</b>	<b>426</b>
<i>Extrinsic versus Intrinsic Motives for Working</i>	426

<i>Traditional versus "New Breed" Values Concerning the Workplace</i>	427	<i>Romantic Love: A Definition</i>	476
<b>Vocational Development</b>	<b>428</b>	<i>On Love and Arousal: If My Heart Is Pounding, It Must Mean I Love You</i>	477
<i>Stages of Vocational Development</i>	429	<i>Romantic versus Companionate Love: Is Romantic Love Any Basis for a Marriage?</i>	479
<i>Coping Styles and Career Selection: Vocational "Types"</i>	430	<b>Loneliness</b>	<b>481</b>
<i>Using the Balance Sheet to Make Career Decisions</i>	432	<i>All the Lonely People</i>	481
<i>Using Psychological Tests to Make Career Decisions</i>	432	<i>Where Do They All Come From? Causes of Loneliness</i>	482
<i>Developmental Tasks in Taking a Job</i>	438	<i>Coping with Loneliness</i>	483
<i>Career Shifts</i>	439	<b>Summary</b>	<b>484</b>
<b>Adjustment in the Workplace</b>	<b>439</b>	<b>Truth or Fiction Revisited</b>	<b>485</b>
<i>Getting Ahead in America</i>	439		
<i>Satisfaction on the Job</i>	440	<b>14. COMMUNICATION AND INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS: A GUIDE ON HOW TO GET FROM HERE TO THERE</b>	<b>488</b>
<i>How to Enhance Job Satisfaction and Productivity: Improving the Quality of Work Life Is Also Good Business</i>	440	<b>Truth or Fiction?</b>	<b>489</b>
<i>Organizational Theory and Adjustment in the Workplace</i>	444	<b>Stages in Relationships</b>	<b>490</b>
<i>Stress and Work</i>	446	<i>Initial Attraction</i>	490
<b>Working Women</b>	<b>449</b>	<i>Building a Relationship</i>	491
<i>Why Do Women Work?</i>	449	<i>Continuation</i>	493
<i>The Workplace for Women</i>	450	<i>Deterioration</i>	495
<b>Unemployment: Problems and Coping</b>	<b>453</b>	<i>Ending</i>	495
<i>Phases of Unemployment</i>	453	<b>Marriage</b>	<b>496</b>
<i>Using a Job-Finding Club to Land a Job</i>	454	<i>Why Do We Get Married?</i>	497
<b>Summary</b>	<b>455</b>	<i>To Whom Do We Get Married? Are Marriages Made in Heaven or in the Neighborhood?</i>	497
<b>Truth or Fiction Revisited</b>	<b>456</b>	<i>Marital Satisfaction: Is Everybody Happy?</i>	499
<b>13. INTERPERSONAL ATTRACTION: OF FRIENDSHIP, LOVE, AND LONELINESS</b>	<b>458</b>	<b>Ways of Coping with Marital Conflict: How to Survive Once the Honeymoon Is Over</b>	<b>504</b>
<b>Truth or Fiction?</b>	<b>459</b>	<i>Challenge Irrational Expectations</i>	505
<b>Attraction</b>	<b>461</b>	<i>Negotiate Differences</i>	505
<i>Physical Attractiveness: How Important Is Looking Good?</i>	462	<i>Make a Contract for Exchanging New Behaviors</i>	506
<i>Attraction and Attitudinal Similarity: Birds of a Feather Flock Together</i>	469	<i>Increase Pleasurable Marital Interactions</i>	506
<i>Complementarity: Every Comic Needs a Straight Man, or Woman</i>	470	<b>Improving Communication Skills</b>	<b>507</b>
<i>Reciprocity: If You're Attracted to Me, You Must Have Excellent Judgment</i>	471	<i>How to Get Started</i>	507
<i>Propinquity: "Simply Because You're Near Me"</i>	471	<i>How to Listen</i>	508
<i>When Parents Say No: The "Romeo and Juliet Effect"</i>	472	<i>How to Learn about Your Partner's Needs</i>	509
<i>Emotions and Attraction: "Get 'Em in a Good Mood"</i>	472	<i>How to Make Requests</i>	509
<i>Playing "Hard to Get": Is Hard to Get Hard to Forget?</i>	473	<i>How to Deliver Criticism</i>	510
<b>Friendship</b>	<b>473</b>	<i>How to Cope with Impasses</i>	511
<i>Development of Friendships</i>	473	<b>Divorce</b>	<b>512</b>
<i>Qualities of Good Friends</i>	474	<b>Alternate Styles of Life</b>	<b>513</b>
<i>On Friendship and Love</i>	475	<i>The Singles Scene: Swinging, Lonely, or All of the Above?</i>	513
<b>Love</b>	<b>475</b>	<i>Cohabitation: "There's Nothing That I Wouldn't Do If You Would Be My POSSLQ"</i>	515
<i>Models of Love</i>	475	<b>Summary</b>	<b>517</b>
<i>Romantic Love in Contemporary Western Culture: A Role-Playing Approach</i>	476	<b>Truth or Fiction Revisited</b>	<b>518</b>
		<b>15. SEXUAL BEHAVIOR: PERSPECTIVES, PATTERNS, PLEASURES, AND PROBLEMS</b>	<b>520</b>
		<b>Truth or Fiction?</b>	<b>521</b>
		<b>Human Sexual Behavior in Perspective: A Tale of Two Cultures</b>	<b>522</b>



<b>U.S. Sexual Behavior in Perspective: A Tale of Three Generations</b>	<b>522</b>	<b>16. HAVING AND REARING CHILDREN</b>	<b>558</b>
<i>The Three R's: Repression, Revolution, and Reaction</i>	523	<b>Truth or Fiction?</b>	<b>559</b>
<i>Patterns of Sexual Behavior</i>	524	<b>Children: To Have or Not to Have</b>	<b>560</b>
<b>The Biological Basis of Sex</b>	<b>528</b>	<i>Reasons to Have Children</i>	561
<i>Female Sexual Anatomy</i>	529	<i>Reasons Not to Have Children</i>	562
<i>Male Sexual Anatomy</i>	530	<b>Conception</b>	<b>563</b>
<i>Vive La Différence or Vive La Similarité?</i>	532	<i>Coping with Infertility</i>	563
<i>Effects of Sex Hormones</i>	532	<i>Preselecting the Sex of Your Child: Fantasy or Reality?</i>	564
<i>Women and PMS: Does Premenstrual Syndrome Doom Women to Misery?</i>	533	<b>Prenatal Development</b>	<b>565</b>
<i>The Sexual-Response Cycle</i>	534	<i>Stages of Prenatal Development</i>	565
<i>Sexual Response and the Aging</i>	536	<i>Effects of Environmental Influences</i>	567
<b>Issues in Human Sexuality</b>	<b>537</b>	<i>Effects of Chromosomal and Genetic Abnormalities</i>	571
<i>Homosexuality</i>	537	<i>Genetic Counseling and Prenatal Testing</i>	571
<i>Pornography</i>	540	<b>Childbirth</b>	<b>572</b>
<i>Forcible Rape</i>	542	<i>The Stages of Childbirth</i>	574
<b>Sexual Dysfunctions and Sex Therapy</b>	<b>543</b>	<i>Methods of Childbirth</i>	575
<i>Types of Sexual Dysfunctions</i>	543	<i>The Postpartum Period</i>	579
<i>Causes of Sexual Dysfunctions</i>	545	<b>Rearing Competent Children: How to Be an Authoritative Parent</b>	<b>582</b>
<i>Sex Therapy</i>	545	<b>Issues in Child-Rearing</b>	<b>584</b>
<b>Sexually Transmitted Diseases</b>	<b>547</b>	<i>Breast-Feeding versus Bottle-Feeding: Does It Make a Difference?</i>	584
<i>Gonorrhea</i>	548	<i>The Children of Divorce</i>	586
<i>Syphilis</i>	548	<i>Child Abuse</i>	590
<i>Herpes</i>	549	<i>The Effects of Day Care</i>	592
<i>Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS)</i>	549	<b>Summary</b>	<b>594</b>
<i>Other Sexually Transmitted Diseases</i>	551	<b>Truth or Fiction Revisited</b>	<b>596</b>
<i>Safe(r) Sex in the Age of AIDS</i>	552	<i>References</i>	R-1
<b>Summary</b>	<b>554</b>	<i>Name Index</i>	I-1
<b>Truth or Fiction Revisited</b>	<b>556</b>	<i>Subject Index</i>	

# ■ Features

## ■ Questionnaires

- The Social Desirability Scale 26
- The Expectancy for Success Scale 64
- The ANDRO Scale: A Measure of Psychological Androgyny 108
- How Content Are You with Your Physical Self? 131
- Ranking Your Values: What Is Important to You? 134
- The Rathus Assertiveness Schedule 170
- Social Readjustment Rating Scale 184
- Are You Type A or Type B? 198
- Locus of Control Scale 218
- Are You a Sensation Seeker? 222
- Why Do You Drink? 246
- The Temple Fear Survey Inventory 282
- Irrational Beliefs Questionnaire 322
- The Suinn Test Anxiety Behavior Scale 376
- The Pleasant Events Schedule—A List of Turn-Ons 381
- Attitudes toward Aging 409
- The Love Scale 478
- The UCLA Loneliness Scale 482
- Do You Endorse a Traditional or a Liberal Marital Role? 500
- Cultural Myths That Create a Climate That Supports Rape 544

## ■ A Closer Look

- Seaweed, Rocks, Waves, and Personal Growth 15
- Coping with Self-Help Books 20
- Do Women Who Compete with Men Suffer from Penis Envy? 44
- Cognitive vs. Psychodynamic Views of Religious Conversion: Do We  
Suddenly See the Light, or Do We Strive to Keep a Lid on the Id? 46
- What's Sweet for Jack Is Often Sour for Jill 91
- What's in a Name? Sign on the Dotted Line and See 133
- On Neurons and Neurotransmitters 190
- Pain Management 192
- Using the Balance Sheet to Make Decisions 196
- The Sobell Experiment 248
- Coffee: Chemotherapy for Depression? 342
- Myths about Menopause 405
- Making Millions in Sales: "A Dirty Job But Someone's Got to Do It" 431
- The Work Junkies 441
- Resisting Advances: Employers Act to Curb Sexual Harassment on the  
Job 452
- What Do You Look at First? 465
- "Let's Make a Deal": On Lonely Hearts Ads and the Matching  
Hypothesis 469



The Marriage Contract: A Way of Clarifying Your Marital Expectations	498
A Family-Centered Approach to Childbirth	579

## ■ **What Do You Say Now?**

Handling a Sexist Remark	102
On Overcoming Negative First Impressions	121
Responding to "Low-Balling"	155
Encouraging a Friend to Seek Help	267
Enhancing Patient-Physician Interactions	269
Suicide Prevention	294
Responding to a Social Provocation	327
Resisting an Invitation to Eat	367
How to Make a Positive Impression at a Job Interview	436
How to Improve Date-Seeking Skills	493
Delivering Criticism	507
Receiving Criticism	512
Make Sex Safe(r) in the Age of AIDS	553
Selecting an Obstetrician	577
Selecting a Day-Care Center	593