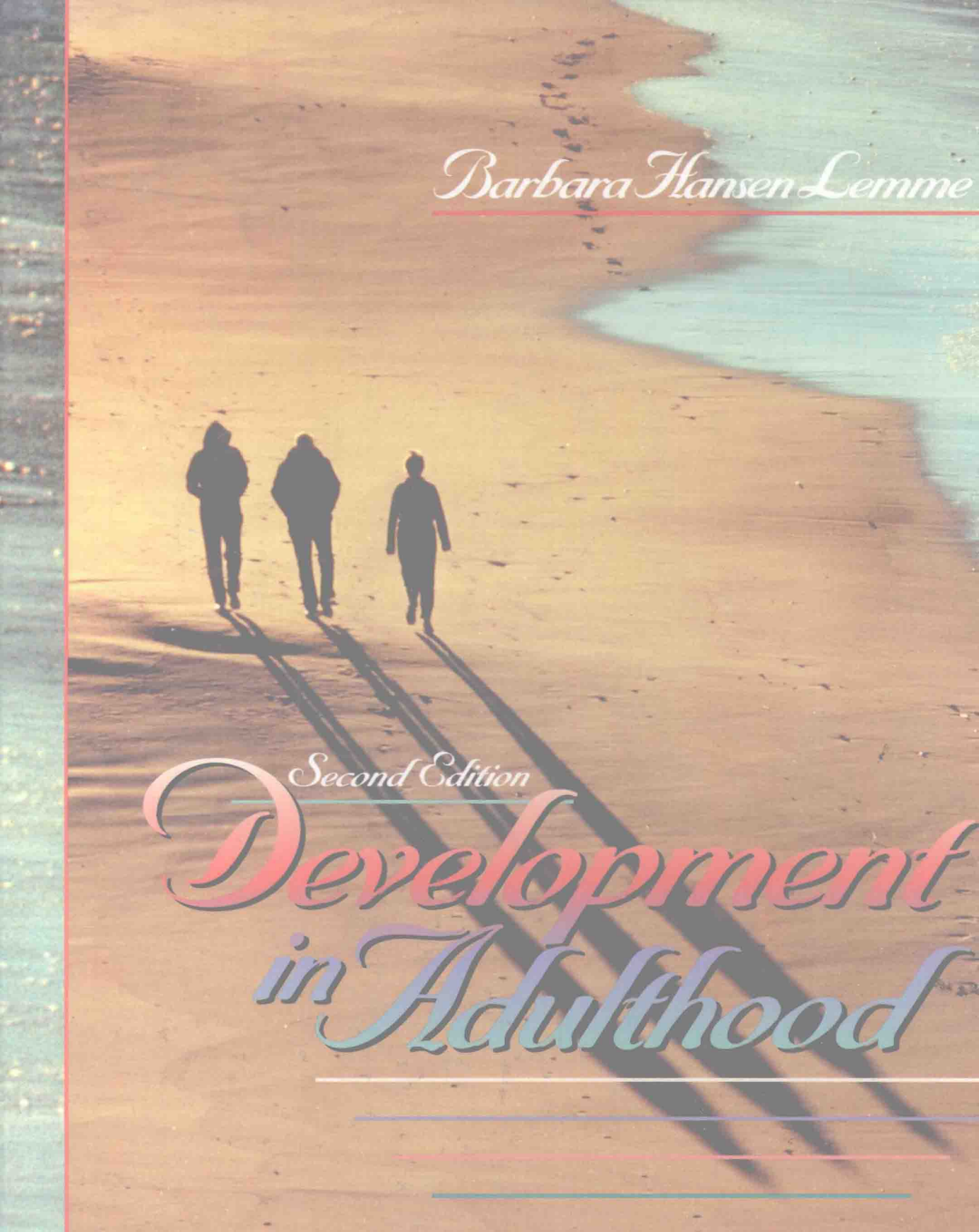

Barbara Hansen Lemme

Second Edition

Development in Adulthood

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Barbara Hansen Lemme
College of DuPage

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Preface

My interest in adult development as a field of study was awakened more than 25 years ago by Bernice Neugarten of the University of Chicago, a pioneer in research on adult development. I was so intrigued by her work that it prompted a change in the direction of my own, culminating in my developing a course in adult development and aging, which I have been teaching ever since. Few texts were available at the time, and none of them reflected my particular approach to the subject matter. I toyed with the idea of writing a text myself, but the timing in terms of my own life course was off. I continued to think and talk about it, and eventually, professional and personal considerations converged in such a way that it was time to, as my grandmother would say, "fish or cut bait." That led to the first edition of this text. And now you are holding the second edition.

The field has continued to evolve in the interim. As I see it, there are several interesting trends at work. First is the growing realization of the importance of life span and aging issues to our personal and professional lives—within psychology and related fields, in government, and in society in general. This is reflected in myriad ways, from the content of professional meetings to media coverage of aging-related topics to the undergraduate and graduate school curriculum. Much of this interest is driven by the demographic changes sweeping all industrialized societies, including our own. Consider a few examples. Did you know that:

- The leading edge of the baby boom (born between 1946 and 1964), the largest generation in human history, is now in its 50s?
- The average life expectancy (now about 75) has increased more rapidly since 1900 than in the preceeding 5,000 years, and that the fastest-growing segment of the population is age 85 and over?
- Because of changes in the structure of the family, the average married couple now has more living parents than children?
- Two-thirds of the new entrants to the job market are now female?
- The average retirement age is now 62?

Second, the desire to understand the various forces that create developmental diversity among individuals is stronger than ever. Thus, growing emphasis is placed on the context of development—on locating the individual within a social, cultural, ethnic, and historical setting—and on the reciprocal nature of interaction both between individuals and between individuals and their environments. And third, there is increasing interest not only in accumulating a storehouse of knowledge about adulthood and aging, but also in applying that knowledge to solve personal and

social problems that affect the everyday lives of individuals. These trends have helped to shape the approach taken in this text.

Goals and Thematic Approach

Teaching is my first love. I have tried to write a book for the types of students I have taught over the course of my teaching career—a heterogeneous group from diverse backgrounds, with varying skill levels, goals, and needs. Some are in college for the first time—in fact, some are the first of their families to ever attend college. Others are returning to complete an interrupted undergraduate education. Still others have advanced degrees and are taking additional courses for personal interest or to upgrade skills or retrain for new careers. My goal has been to write a book for this audience—as well as for instructors—that offers substantive, scholarly, comprehensive, and up-to-date coverage of the core concepts and issues in the field of adult development and that at the same time is engaging, interesting, and relevant both personally and vocationally. I have tried to integrate an appreciation of the historical evolution of concepts along with the most current thinking in the field. In addition, I have tried to offer a somewhat different approach to the organization and presentation of content—one that reflects my own experience as a classroom teacher and that seems to work for students. And I have aimed at a smooth, clear, personal writing style—as if I were conversing with the reader in the classroom rather than on the written page.

Theoretical foundations include the life-span developmental perspective and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory. This book recognizes that individuals exist within complex, multilayered environments, and that the nature and structure of forces operating within these environments exert significant influence on development. Thus, the focus is on development-in-context. While the text's primary emphasis is on psychological theories and concepts, sociocultural, historical, biological, economic, and political issues are treated as well. The approach is broadly multidisciplinary. The developmental significance of age, cohort, gender, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and culture is emphasized and integrated throughout. A balanced view of development is presented—neither overly optimistic nor pessimistic—which stresses the nature and origins of developmental diversity.

Features

I'd like to highlight three major distinguishing features of this text, which flow logically from the goals and approach described above. First, pedagogy includes an accessible writing style, clear chapter organization, periodic summaries, in-text definitions of terms, end-of-chapter review questions, and critical thinking questions embedded throughout the text. These features are intended to clarify and reinforce content, and thus increase student motivation and maintain interest while enhancing comprehension and maximizing retention. The critical thinking questions encourage the reader to remain actively involved with the material; the instructor may use them for class discussion purposes. A conscious effort has been made not to clutter the text with ineffective or superfluous pedagogy.

Second, the emphasis on development-in-context is evident in the inclusion of research and theory on the impact of cohort, gender, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic

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status, and culture on development. This emphasis helps the student to grasp and appreciate the nature and sources of diversity in development and assists the instructor in presenting a broader perspective and overcoming biases in the research literature, as discussed in Chapter 1. Examples of topics reflecting this approach are listed below.

Chapter 1: Ageism and cultural, racial, socioeconomic, and gender bias; difficulties in identifying and defining American ethnic groups
Chapter 2: Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory; the impact of gender, social class, and ethnicity on the development and expression of generativity
Chapter 3: The influence of culture, gender, ethnicity, and age on the development of the self (for example, collectivism versus individualism)
Chapter 4: Individual and cohort differences in cognitive development
Chapter 5: Psychosocial explanations of diversity in cognitive aging
Chapter 6: Age, gender, and ethnic differences in social network formation; gender and age differences in friendship; sexual orientation; male-female differences in sexuality and sexual attitudes
Chapter 7: Nuclear, traditional, and opportune family structures; age and gender differences in marital satisfaction; same-sex and nonmarried romantic relationships; cultural and ethnic differences in grandparenthood; the influence of race/ethnicity on the caregiver role
Chapter 8: Increasing diversity in the workforce; significant coverage of gender differences in career development; ethnicity, social class, gender, and the economics of retirement
Chapter 9: Sources of diversity in primary and secondary aging; variations in physical development and aging among males and females
Chapter 10: Racial/ethnic, age, and gender differences in health and mortality
Chapter 11: Age changes and gender differences in the dimensions of subjective well-being; effects of gender, social class, race, and age on locus of control; age, gender, and ethnic differences in rates and nature of mental disorders, coping and help-seeking; need for culturally sensitive treatment
Chapter 12: Historical changes and cultural differences in attitudes toward death and the experience of grief; gender, age, and cultural differences in death anxiety

Third, this text takes a fresh look at the field and strives for new ways of presenting content, including expanded coverage of high-interest and highly relevant material often overlooked or given short shrift in other texts. Application to real life is integrated throughout, rather than set aside in boxes or end-of-text chapters, and emphasis is placed on relevant social issues. Most chapters open with a personal anecdote that ties some aspect of the chapter content to my personal experience. The focus on application engages student interest and provides a bridge between theory, research, and practice, enabling students to connect the material to their own personal lives as well as demonstrating its utility in their careers. Some examples are listed below.

Chapter 1: Critical thinking approach to research, providing tools to enable students either to "consume" it more effectively in their personal and academic lives or use it more effectively in their work; discussion of

advantages and disadvantages of each method and design and of limitations and biases in the research; effects of changing demographics on U.S. society

Chapter 2: Ecological Systems Theory; extensive coverage of research on generativity, including Kotre's theory and studies of its correlates and antecedents; Costa and McCrae's trait model of personality

Chapter 3: Development of the self and related components (self-esteem, self-efficacy, identity); individualist versus collectivist cultures; social and evolutionary origins of gender differences

Chapter 4: Presentation of the decrementalist versus continued potential view of cognitive development in adulthood, including the metaphor of the shipwreck versus the butterfly; comparisons of learning in childhood and adulthood, adult intelligence versus school intelligence, and analytic versus practical intelligence; creativity, wisdom, and expertise

Chapter 5: Brain plasticity; cognitive intervention studies

Chapter 6: Extensive coverage of the nature and impact of social support; life-span attachment theory and the effect of early experience on adult relationships; adult friendship; sibling relationships; leaving home; mate selection

Chapter 7: Family systems theory and family development theory; changing family structures; life-span developmental view of parenthood (early, middle, and late stages); the "sandwich generation"; the caregiver role; family violence

Chapter 8: The changing work world and workforce; multiple roles (combining work and family); explicit linkage of the economics of aging with gender and race/ethnicity; feminization of poverty; social history of retirement and its continuing evolution; major misconceptions of Social Security

Chapter 9: Purposeful placement of the material on physical development, illness, and health later in the book to allow fuller development of the life-span perspective and to avoid setting a tone of deterioration and loss early on; environmental modifications to accommodate sensory aging

Chapter 10: Health promotion and illness prevention; transgenerational design; polypharmacy, signs of drug toxicity, and adverse drug reactions in the elderly

Chapter 11: Happiness and subjective well-being; religion and spirituality; depression and ruminative coping

Chapter 12: Right-to-die movement; improving care of the dying

New to This Edition

I know students—and faculty for that matter—are often skeptical of the need for new editions of textbooks. For students, the necessity of buying a new, instead of a used, text can be a financial blow. I believe that this second edition of *Development in Adulthood* offers valuable improvements over the first version. This is owing, in part, to the integration of new research available in the last few years. Some of the improvement results from adjustments made as a result of valuable feedback from students and faculty who have reviewed as well as actually used the first edition. And some of it derives from my own development as an author—my enhanced sense of what works and how to present material effectively. Every chapter has re-

ceived the equivalent of a careful and thorough spring cleaning (revision, reorganization, clarification, update). In addition, some significant revisions have been made.

First, the basic structure of the text has been reorganized in a couple of important ways. The original Chapters 3 and 4, which dealt with various aspects of the development of the self, have been combined and reorganized into one chapter, Chapter 3—The Self: Development and Issues of Culture, Gender, Ethnicity, and Age. No major content areas have been lost in this process, but the presentation of the material has been improved. Chapters 7 and 8 (now 6 and 7) have been reorganized so that matters of general social development are covered in Chapter 6—Social Development, Friendship, and Mate Selection—which allows all of the material dealing with family development and issues to be contained in Chapter 7—Family Ties, Transitions, and Challenges. Finally, the original Chapter 10—Physical Development, Aging, and Health—has been expanded to two chapters: Chapter 9—Physical Development and Aging—and Chapter 10—Health, Longevity, and Prevention. This change has enabled me to expand the coverage of important aspects of physical development as well as to place greater emphasis on health promotion and disease prevention. Again, this adjustment reflects the growing interest in the application of critical knowledge in this area.

Second, where appropriate, boxes highlighting the impact of cohort, ethnicity, culture, and age on individual lives—titled "Understanding the Developmental Context"—have been added. These are found in Chapters 1, 5, 7, 8, 10, and 12. I must confess a resistance to adding special boxes and features, which I feel disrupt the flow of the text. My impression is that some texts have added so many distractions of this type in an attempt to be "relevant" and to cater to market forces that they risk fragmenting the content and becoming a disservice to the reader, who cannot easily discern what is most important. On the other hand, at times there are issues of special interest that do not fit neatly into the body of the chapter or that deserve special emphasis. Thus, in this text boxes are used sparingly but, hopefully, effectively.

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I am especially aware of the importance of social support in life in general and during challenging periods in particular. I have been very fortunate to be able to rely on the support of a number of individuals, whom I am pleased to acknowledge here. Since the inception of this project, I have benefited from the enthusiastic support and wise counsel of my editor at Allyn and Bacon, Carolyn Merrill. We have been, as she once said, "on the same page"—a true collaboration for which I am very grateful and from which I'm sure this text has profited. I have known Carolyn since her days as our publisher's representative for Allyn and Bacon and have been delighted to watch her rise in the world of academic publishing. Her infectious good humor and optimism are a good match to my own style, and I have enjoyed our working relationship and friendship enormously. So thank you, Carolyn . . . again. Additional Allyn and Bacon personnel deserving thanks are Rosalie Briand, production coordinator, and Amy Goldmacher, editorial assistant, for helping in numerous ways throughout this process, as well as Laurie Frankenthaler, for her creative photo research. Another very special thank-you must go to John and Evelyn Ward of Trinity Publishers Services, with whom I was fortunate enough to work on both

editions of this text and whose job it was to manage the actual production process. Once again, I felt that I had "friends at court," an instant affinity with people whose approach to work and life seemed to match my own, and from whom I received invaluable advice, assistance, and reassurance. Some day I hope to meet these people in person!

In addition, my thanks go to the many publisher's reviewers whose suggestions, criticisms, and encouragement at various points along the way were invaluable. Reviewers of the first edition were Harriet Amster, University of Texas, Arlington; Janet Belsky, Middle Tennessee State University; Barbara Biales, College of St. Catherine; Stephanie Clancy, Southern Illinois University; Lisa B. Elliott, Monroe Community College; Bernard Gorman, Hofstra University and Nassau Community College; Dorothy Jackson, Ohio State University; Janey W. Johnson, University of Maryland; Phyllis M. Ladrigan, Nazareth College; Kathleen Malley, Boston University; David B. Mitchell, Southern Methodist University; David Payne, University of Kentucky; Dean Rodeheaver, University of Wisconsin, Green Bay; R. Kevin Rowell, University of Central Arkansas; Jane Rysberg, California State University at Chico; Susan Krauss Whitbourne, University of Massachusetts, Amherst; Joseph L. White, University of California, Irvine. Reviewers of the second edition were Paul C. Amrhein, University of New Mexico; Gary Creasey, Illinois State University; Bernard S. Gorman, Nassau Community College; Dale A. Lund, University of Utah; Romy Nocera, Bowling Green State University; Jenny Overeynder, State University of New York at Geneso; Lisa Pavlik, Bergen Community College; Nancy K. Rice, State University of New York at Geneso; Sue V. Saxon, University of South Florida; Wayne Weiten, Santa Clara University.

Once again, I want to acknowledge the ongoing assistance of Diana Fitzwater, reference librarian at the College of DuPage, who tirelessly provided me with the research support and reference materials I needed along the way. Finally, I want to express my deep gratitude and love to my friends and family, who have in so many ways enriched my life, especially my mom, June Hansen, my sister, Judith Hansen Enos, and Ron and Becca, husband and daughter, special blessings indeed.

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1 The Study of Development in Adulthood

I remember looking out the window as the plane began to descend and seeing nothing but ocean. Finally, a speck of land began to appear—the island on which I would spend the next week. It was a coral atoll, six feet above sea level, the district center of one of the island groups of the Pacific. I spent the next three months like this, moving among the islands of American Samoa and Micronesia, studying the effects of rapid cultural change. My first experience as a field researcher was an extraordinary one. Having grown up in the Midwest, this was my initial exposure to another culture, let alone cultures as diverse as those represented among these islands. My light Norwegian coloring set me apart from the native populations in such a way that for the first time I felt as an outsider feels. The inherent difficulties of doing research were compounded by the personal difficulties of adjustments to climate, food, and social customs, as well as loneliness, boredom, and, on occasion, anxiety. I met many local people, Peace Corps workers, politicians, international jet-setters, and famous oceanographers. I explored islands where some of the major battles of World War II took place, where tanks still stood sentry in the waters offshore, and where unexploded shells and mines kept some areas cordoned off all these years later. I mistakenly wandered into the compound of a U.S. president and found myself surrounded by machine guns. I was faced with the suspicion by some that I was a CIA agent. I saw my country from the vantage point of others for the first time. Just on the brink of adulthood, at age 21, I had an experience of a lifetime. And I was never the same.

This is a book about adult life, that period that begins around the end of adolescence—somewhere between age 18 and the early 20s in most cases—and ends with death. In other words, this is a book about most of the human life span. Each chapter opens with something from my experience that is related to the chapter content—like the story you just read. This serves both as a way of introducing myself and, hopefully, also connects the chapter with real life.

The goals of this opening chapter are as follows: to provide an overview of adult development as a field of study; to establish a perspective or point of view that will direct the chapters to follow; to review the major research methods and designs

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