



# MARRIAGE & FAMILY THE

MARCIA LASSWELL

THOMAS LASSWELL

S E C O N D E D I T I O N



# MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY

SECOND EDITION

Marcia Lasswell

CALIFORNIA STATE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY, POMONA

Thomas Lasswell

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

WADSWORTH PUBLISHING COMPANY  
Belmont, California  
A Division of Wadsworth, Inc.

*Sociology Editor* Sheryl Fullerton  
*Assistant Editor* Liz Clayton  
*Special Projects Editor* Judith McKibben  
*Editorial Associate* Cynthia Haus  
*Production Editor* Vicki Friedberg  
*Designer* Merle Sanderson  
*Print Buyer* Karen Hunt  
*Copy Editor* John Ziemer  
*Photo Researcher* Lindsay Kefauver  
*Compositor* Carlisle Graphics  
*Cover* Merle Sanderson  
*Cover Calligraphy* Elizabeth Lada  
*Signing Representative* Cynthia Berg

*About the Cover* The overall impression is similar to a family album. The rich texture and colors of the background represent the intricate fabric of marriage, while the visual sensation of movement signifies the change and growth that occur over time in marriages and families. The bright and flowing style of the title conveys the happiness and rewards that marriage and the family can offer.

© 1987 by Wadsworth, Inc.

© 1982 by D.C. Heath and Company. All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transcribed, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher, Wadsworth Publishing Company, Belmont, California 94002, a division of Wadsworth, Inc.

Printed in the United States of America 34

2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10—91 90 89 88

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Lasswell, Marcia E.  
Marriage and the family.

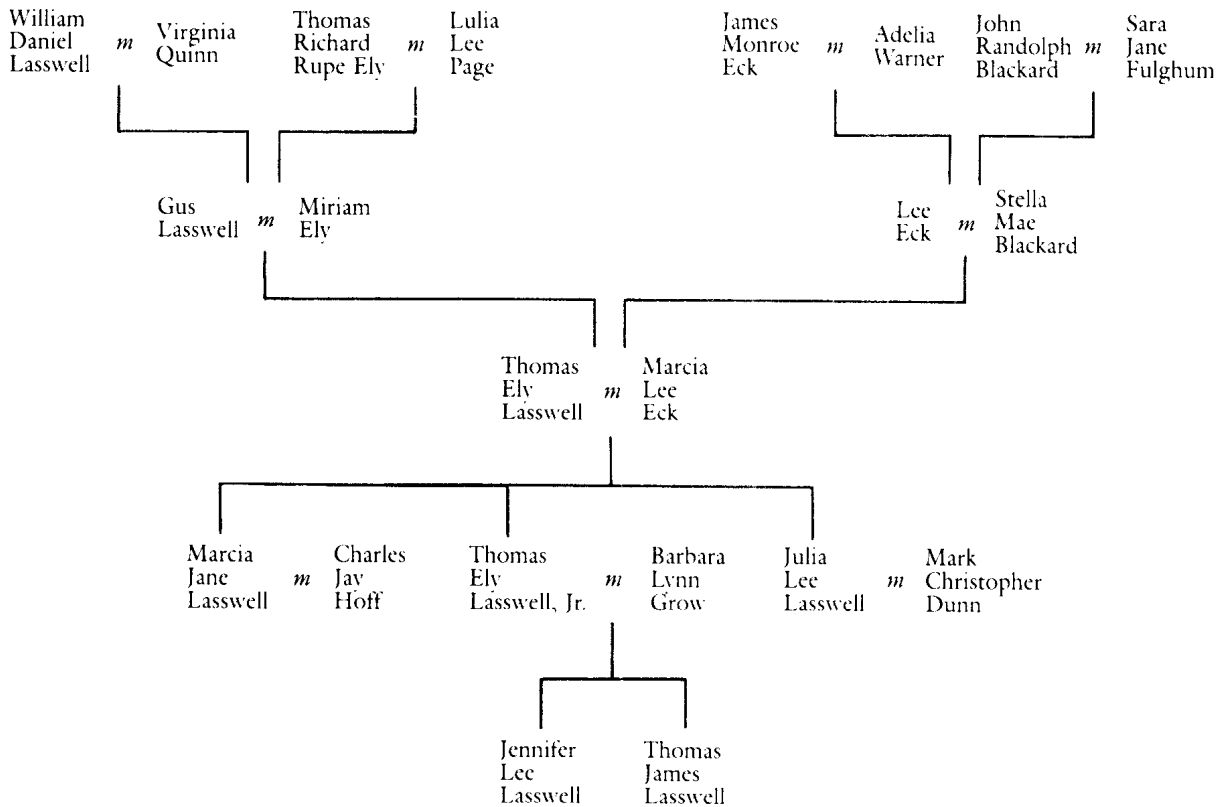
Bibliography: p.  
Includes indexes.

1. Marriage—United States. 2. Family—United States. I. Lasswell, Thomas E. II. Title.

HQ536.L375 1987 306.8'0973 86-28149  
ISBN 0-534-07584-3

## DEDICATION

*Without our "tree of life," this book could not have been written.*



# BRIEF CONTENTS

**PHOTOGRAPH CREDITS** x

**PREFACE** xi

**ONE** MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY IN THE UNITED STATES 2

**TWO** MALE-FEMALE SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES 30

**THREE** ATTRACTION AND LOVE 54

**FOUR** HUMAN SEXUALITY 80

**FIVE** SINGLEHOOD AND COHABITATION 114

**SIX** MATE SELECTION AND GETTING MARRIED 144

**SEVEN** SELF-AWARENESS AND COMMUNICATION IN MARRIAGE 180

**EIGHT** MARRIAGE AND ITS CHALLENGES 210

**NINE** FAMILY PLANNING AND BIRTH CONTROL 242

**TEN** PREGNANCY, BIRTH, AND TRANSITION TO PARENTHOOD 288

**ELEVEN** PARENTING: ON BEING MOTHERS AND FATHERS 330

**TWELVE** OUTSIDE INFLUENCES ON RELATIONSHIPS 364

**THIRTEEN** DIVORCE: CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES 404

**FOURTEEN** REMARRIAGE AND STEPPARENTING 446

**FIFTEEN** POSTPARENTAL LIFE AND AGING 476

**APPENDIX A** SEXUAL ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY 513

**APPENDIX B** THE LOVE PROFILE 523

**APPENDIX C** HANDLING FAMILY FINANCES 535

**REFERENCES** 555

**NAME INDEX** 580

**SUBJECT INDEX** 587

# PHOTOGRAPH CREDITS

- Page 2.** Culver Pictures, Inc.  
**Page 9.** (Top) © Joel Gordon; (bottom left) Janice Fullman/The Picture Cube; (bottom right) Michael Hayman/Photo Researchers, Inc.  
**Page 18.** Michael Weisbrot/Stock, Boston  
**Page 30.** Renee Lynn/Photo Researchers, Inc.  
**Page 35.** Frank Siteman/The Picture Cube  
**Page 38.** Susan Lapides/1980 Design Conceptions  
**Page 39.** Peter Southwick/Stock, Boston  
**Page 43.** (Top) Courtesy Judith McKibben and Alex Achimore; (bottom) UPI/Bettmann Newsphotos  
**Page 48.** Abigail Heyman/Archive Pictures Inc.  
**Page 54.** © Frank Siteman  
**Page 59.** Abigail Heyman/Archive Pictures Inc.  
**Page 67.** Michael Malyszko/Stock, Boston  
**Page 72.** Evan Johnson/Jeroboam, Inc.  
**Page 76.** Joan Liftin/Archive Pictures Inc.  
**Page 80.** Frederick Bodin/Stock, Boston  
**Page 85.** Ethan Hoffman/Archive Pictures Inc.  
**Page 92.** George W. Gardner/The Image Works  
**Page 105.** © Joel Gordon/1979  
**Page 114.** Joan Liftin/Archive Pictures Inc.  
**Page 119.** Abigail Heyman/Archive Pictures Inc.  
**Page 121.** Abigail Heyman/Archive Pictures Inc.  
**Page 124.** Cary Wolinsky/Stock, Boston  
**Page 138.** Morgan Renard/Sygma  
**Page 139.** UPI/Bettmann Newsphotos  
**Page 144.** Sylvia Plachy/Archive Pictures Inc.  
**Page 149.** Reuters/Bettmann Newsphotos  
**Page 151.** © Joel Gordon/1985  
**Page 163.** Polly Brown/Archive Pictures Inc.  
**Page 172.** Arthur Grace/Stock, Boston  
**Page 180.** Miro Vintoniv/Stock, Boston  
**Page 191.** Geoffrey Biddle/Archive Pictures Inc.  
**Page 201.** Alice Kandell/Photo Researchers, Inc.  
**Page 203.** Teri Leigh Stratford/Photo Researchers, Inc.  
**Page 210.** © Joel Gordon/1985  
**Page 216.** Ellen Pines Sheffield/Woodfin Camp & Associates  
**Page 224.** Lynne Jaeger Weinstein/Woodfin Camp & Associates  
**Page 233.** © Joel Gordon/1980  
**Page 237.** Harriet Gans/The Image Works  
**Page 242.** Courtesy Merle Sanderson and John Osborne  
**Page 245.** UPI/Bettmann Newsphotos  
**Page 260.** © Joel Gordon/1986  
**Page 283.** UPI/Bettmann Newsphotos  
**Page 288.** Frank Siteman/Stock, Boston  
**Page 293.** © Joel Gordon/1983  
**Page 299.** Gary Bistram/The Image Bank  
**Page 313.** Courtesy Marj Sanders  
**Page 330.** © Peter Vandermark  
**Page 336.** Suzanne Arms/Jeroboam, Inc.  
**Page 342.** © Frank Siteman  
**Page 351.** © Joel Gordon  
**Page 357.** Hanna W. Schreiber/Photo Research, Inc.  
**Page 364.** © Joel Gordon/1979  
**Page 369.** UPI/Bettmann Newsphotos  
**Page 383.** Mark Godfrey/Archive Pictures Inc.  
**Page 387.** NASA  
**Page 397.** James Motlow/Jeroboam, Inc.  
**Page 404.** Susan Rosenberg/Photo Researchers, Inc.  
**Page 415.** Mark Antman/Stock, Boston  
**Page 424.** © Ellis Herwig  
**Page 430.** Jane Scherr/Jeroboam, Inc.  
**Page 431.** Hazel Hankin/Stock, Boston  
**Page 441.** © Paul Conklin  
**Page 446.** © Helen Nestor  
**Page 457.** Lynne Jaeger Weinstein/Woodfin Camp & Associates  
**Page 463.** Courtesy Merle Sanderson and John Osborne  
**Page 469.** Jack Spratt/The Image Works  
**Page 476.** Charles Harbutt/Archive Pictures Inc.  
**Page 480.** Michael D. Sullivan/Texastock  
**Page 485.** © Joel Gordon/1985  
**Page 491.** Rose Skytta/Jeroboam, Inc.  
**Page 501.** Elizabeth Crews/Stock, Boston  
**Page 504.** Abigail Heyman/Archive Pictures Inc.

# PREFACE

There are some things about marriage and the family that do not change. Some form of them is culturally institutionalized in every society, no matter how large or how small, how isolated or how cosmopolitan. Every individual has a concept of what it means to be married and of how one goes about getting married; 95 percent of all Americans will marry at least once during their lifetimes. The average American is spending more years in some form of family living than ever before in our society, or for that matter than the average person at any other time in any society.

Although marriage and the family are here to stay, at least for the foreseeable future, both are constantly changing. The very changes themselves are evidence of the resilience and viability of those social institutions. When we set about to prepare this second edition, we were astonished to discover how much change had occurred since our first edition. Within a few short years there were marked changes in the expectation of life at birth, in the birthrate, in the average age at first marriage of both men and women, in the number of children born out of wedlock, in the acceptability and availability of a variety of forms of contraception, in age-specific divorce rates, and in the likelihood that divorced women would remarry, to mention a few of the many obvious trends in marriage and family patterns.

This book has attempted to assemble the most valid and reliable information available for understanding and explaining the way that people grow up to want to marry and how they choose marriage mates; why problems occur in marital relationships and what has been learned about solving them; how people cope with marital disruption, the aging of their partners and of themselves, the departure of their children, and the death of family members. To the extent that it does these things, it is a book of factual information about marriage and the family. At the same time, it presents these facts with discussions about how they can be useful in everyday life—how to help children learn about sex, how to practice effective family planning, how to prepare for childbirth, how to deal with family finances, how to understand the way that a partner wants to be loved.

One of us is a psychologist, the other a sociologist. We are both social psychologists and marriage, family, and child therapists. Both of us have appointments in academic departments and in clinics; both have private practices. We have experienced more than 36 years of marriage to each other—rearing three children, launching them into marriage and careers, and becoming grandparents.

We have undertaken to introduce our readers to some major theories that apply to marriage and family life as well as to factual information. We think of ourselves as integrationists with respect to family theory rather than as proponents of any one special theory, even though we are both convinced that relationships of any sort must be understood as interpersonal systems, with each individual in any system influencing every other individual within the system.

Key terms that may need definition for readers appear in boldface type where they are first used and are defined in the glossary at the end of the chapter in which they first appear. The appendixes at the end of the book may be included in assigned reading at the pleasure of the instructor.

For those who are interested, a study guide is available from the publisher. Prepared by Tom Gillette and John Wood, it provides self-test questions, review items, key terms, and objectives for each chapter. Gillette and Wood have also prepared an instructor's manual, which offers a bank of questions for test construction. These test items are also available on Micro-Pac, Wadsworth's computerized testing service. For more information contact Helga Newman, Wadsworth Publishing Company, Ten Davis Drive, Belmont, CA 94002, 415-595-2350, or your local Wadsworth sales representative. For instructors who do not have access to a computer, the test items are available from the Wadsworth Teletesting Service (415-593-EXAM).

We gratefully acknowledge the valuable contributions of our colleagues in the field who have supplied us with the research findings on which the book is based. We learned much from our teacher, Harvey J. Locke, who taught us the extreme importance of being critical of the research methods by which information was obtained. We wish to thank our critical reviewers who helped us to sharpen our manuscript: Eleen Baumann, Oregon State University; Cathy Cameron, LaVerne College; Carole Carroll, Middle Tennessee State University; Henry Comby, Tulsa Junior College, Metro Campus; Ross Klein, Iowa State University; James Long, Golden West College; Daniel Schores, Austin College; and Harold Whittington, Temple Junior College.

We are especially appreciative of Sheryl Fullerton's interest in and acquisition of our manuscript for Wadsworth Publishing Company; for the work of Judith McKibben, Special Projects Editor; Vicki Friedberg, Production Editor; Liz Clayton, Assistant Editor; Cindy Haus, Editorial Associate; Merle Sanderson, Designer; and Lindsay Kefauver, who researched the photos for the book. Last of all, but far from least, our special thanks go to Pat Tice, who lived with our demands and frustrations in preparing the original draft of the manuscript and who was always willing to help and to smile when deadlines came, and to Sydney Alter for her aid and encouragement.



# DETAILED CONTENTS

Photograph Credits x  
Preface xi

---

## 1 MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY IN THE UNITED STATES 2

The State of Health of Marriage and the Family 4  
Changing Marriage and Family Patterns 7  
Box: The Preindustrial Family in America 12  
Family Forms 17  
Marriage Forms 19  
Marriage and Family Research and Theory 22  
Summary 26  
Glossary 27

---

## 2 MALE-FEMALE SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES 30

Learning Gender Roles 32  
Box: Describing the Ideal Man and the Ideal Woman 33  
Sex, Gender, and Sex Preference 40  
Box: Gender Roles at Work in Play Behavior 42  
How Gender Roles Mold Our Lives 46  
Summary 50  
Glossary 51

---

## 3 ATTRACTION AND LOVE 54

Attraction 56  
Box: Adolescence: Gotta Ring, Gotta Car? 64  
Love 65

Research on Love	69
Family and Peer Effects on Love	74
Summary	78
Glossary	79

---

## 4 HUMAN SEXUALITY 80

How Children Learn about Sex	82
Box: Teaching Kids about Sex	88
Adolescent Sexual Behavior	89
Legal Institutions and Law Enforcement Agencies	95
Sexual Sensations	95
The Process of Orgasm	96
Sexual Fantasies	98
Sexual Scripts	100
Sexual Preferences	103
Types of Sexual Relationships	106
Summary	109
Glossary	111

---

## 5 SINGLEHOOD AND COHABITATION 114

The Choice to Be Single	116
Single Lifestyles	121
Singlehood and Sex	125
Cohabitation	129
Box: Cross-Cultural Views on Cohabitation	137
Summary	140
Glossary	141

---

## 6 MATE SELECTION AND GETTING MARRIED 144

Mate Selection Cross-Culturally	146
Differential Association	147
Negative and Positive Factors in Mate Selection	148
Theories of Mate Selection	154
Box: What Makes Love Grow?	158
Life Cycle and Mate Selection	159
The Transition from Choice to Commitment	166
Commitment to a Relationship	168
Summary	176
Glossary	178

---

## 7 SELF-AWARENESS AND COMMUNICATION IN MARRIAGE

- Sending and Receiving Messages 182
- Elements of Communication 184
- Box: Communication about Emotions 192
- Styles of Communication 194
- Sexual Communication 197
- Resolving Differences 201
- Summary 208
- Glossary 209

---

## 8 MARRIAGE AND ITS CHALLENGES

- The Marriage Partnership 212
- Marriage Styles 220
- Decision-Making Challenges 226
- Time Management Challenges 235
- Box: Leisure-Time Management 236
- Summary 238
- Glossary 239

---

## 9 FAMILY PLANNING AND BIRTH CONTROL

- The History of Contraceptive Methods 244
- Fertility 246
- Why People Have Children 253
- Voluntary Childlessness 254
- Birth Control 258
- Box: Sexual Practices May Change in Future 270
- Induced Abortion 274
- Involuntary Childlessness 279
- Summary 285
- Glossary 286

---

## 10 PREGNANCY, BIRTH, AND TRANSITION TO PARENTHOOD

- Reasons for Having Children 290
- Financial Aspects of Childbearing 291
- Conception 293

Pregnancy 297  
Childbirth 307  
Bonding 315  
Breastfeeding 317  
Adjustments to Parenthood 319  
Box: Crying 324  
Summary 326  
Glossary 327

---

## 11 PARENTING ON BEING MOTHERS AND FATHERS 330

Idealization 332  
Family Roles 332  
Box: Suggestions for Effective Discipline 340  
Parenting Styles 341  
Discipline, Cooperation, and Communication 346  
Father-Mother Differences 349  
Influences of Children on Their Parents 353  
Summary 361  
Glossary 363

---

## 12 OUTSIDE INFLUENCES ON RELATIONSHIPS 364

Stress in Families 367  
Work 369  
Friends 391  
Kin and In-Laws 394  
Religion and Church 398  
Box: Marriage Encounter 400  
Summary 401  
Glossary 402

---

## 13 DIVORCE: CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES 404

Divorce in the United States 406  
Causes of Marital Difficulties and Divorce 411  
Box: Divorce among the Elderly 412  
Professional Help 419  
Stages in the Divorce Process 421  
Adjustments to the End of a Marriage 422  
Adjustments to New Lifestyles 436  
Summary 444  
Glossary 445

---

## 14 REMARRIAGE AND STEPPARENTING

- Remarriage 448
- Financial Concerns 454
- Blended Families 455
- BOX: The Blended Family 456
- In-Laws 463
- Ex-Spouses 464
- Friends 467
- Remarriage after Widowhood 468
- Summary 472
- Glossary 473

---

## 15 POSTPARENTAL LIFE AND AGING

- The Growing Elderly Population 478
- BOX: Older Achievers 481
- The Postparental Period 483
- The Role of Grandparent 487
- Retirement 490
- Old People and Their Families 495
- Older Marriages 496
- Sex and the Older Person 503
- Elderly Single People 505
- Integrity in Aging 508
- Implications for the Future 509
- Summary 510
- Glossary 511

**Appendix A** Sexual Anatomy and Physiology 513

**Appendix B** The Love Profile 523

**Appendix C** Handling Family Finances 535

- References 555
- Name Index 580
- Subject Index 587

# MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY





*At Piggott, Ark., Monday evening, J. A. Northington and Mrs. S. R. Benson were quietly married. Mrs. Benson is a refined and highly respected lady of Gibson. Mr. Northington is one of Campbell's most prominent merchants. The marriage occurred much earlier than first intended, on account of Mr. Northington's housekeeper unexpectedly leaving.*

T

his is a book about some of the experiences of nearly all Americans—experiences that usually involve deep emotions and that most people consider some of the most important in their lives. The reality of these life experiences lies in the beliefs, feelings, and behaviors of those who experience them, as well as in the social and legal meanings given to marriage and the family.

*Love, sexual intercourse, commitment, cohabitation, marriage, childbearing, parenting, family, dissolution, and child custody* are terms for experiences about which most people have strong feelings. Even people who have not had a particular experience often have strong beliefs about how people who do have this experience should behave and feel. This chapter presents an overview of the topics of love, sex, marriage, and the family, including the issues central to our personal and social judgments about them.

# MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY IN THE UNITED STATES

---

*Dunklin Democrat,*  
Kennett, Missouri,  
May 16, 1901

---

Families are a prominent feature of every society. Very little happens in people's lives that is not affected by family life and that does not, in turn, affect their own family. Not only are families molded by society into whatever forms are functional, but also families contribute significantly to the success of the society to which they belong. Families prepare future citizens and nurture and sustain adults engaged in the day-to-day business of the society. Sociologists and anthropologists have recently been emphasizing more than ever before that the family is the primary social invention that shapes us into human beings.

Perhaps more than any other feature of the family, its endurance as an institution stands out. This endurance both provides individual family members throughout their lives with a feeling of continuity ("roots") and gives them a sense of leaving a heritage that future generations can use as a similar path for establishing their identities. Each family lives in historical time, not only making its own fate but also being influenced daily in important ways by world events—wars, economic ups and downs, and other less dramatic public occurrences (Elder 1977).

The American belief in the family, demonstrated by the widespread concern for its welfare, as well as for other characteristics of the family—including its problems—is a main subject of this book. We will discuss how the family unit still fulfills basic survival needs for the young, although it has changed from a total institution to a system that focuses primarily on the needs of companionship, love, and intimacy. In a comprehensive review of family life in the United States today, the director of the National Institute of Mental Health said:

The family gives each newborn its primary nurturing environment, and as time passes, is each child's primary socializing agent, shaping its capacity for personal relations, interpreting and mediating the vast and complex outside world. Beyond these recognized functions we largely take for granted, the family exerts other powerful influences. It can provide us with a continuity of identity throughout our lives—a present network of relatedness, roots into the past, and branches to the future. It is a platform for each member's stages of growth and the intimate arena for learning to recognize and adjust to these stages in others. It has an internal dynamic quality, its functions changing over time according to its members' needs and enduring long after its members have dispersed. Externally the family affects other people and institutions, both as the family unit collectively engages with the world and as its members sally forth, imprinted by their family ways. And the idea of family itself has been extended, providing a unifying function for new combinations of people who choose to call themselves a family. (Pardes 1979, p. 1)

---

## THE STATE OF HEALTH OF MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY

A cross-section of Americans was asked recently with whom they would spend their time if they had only six months to live. Although the question poses a gloomy thought, the answer gives a vote of confidence to the family: an over-