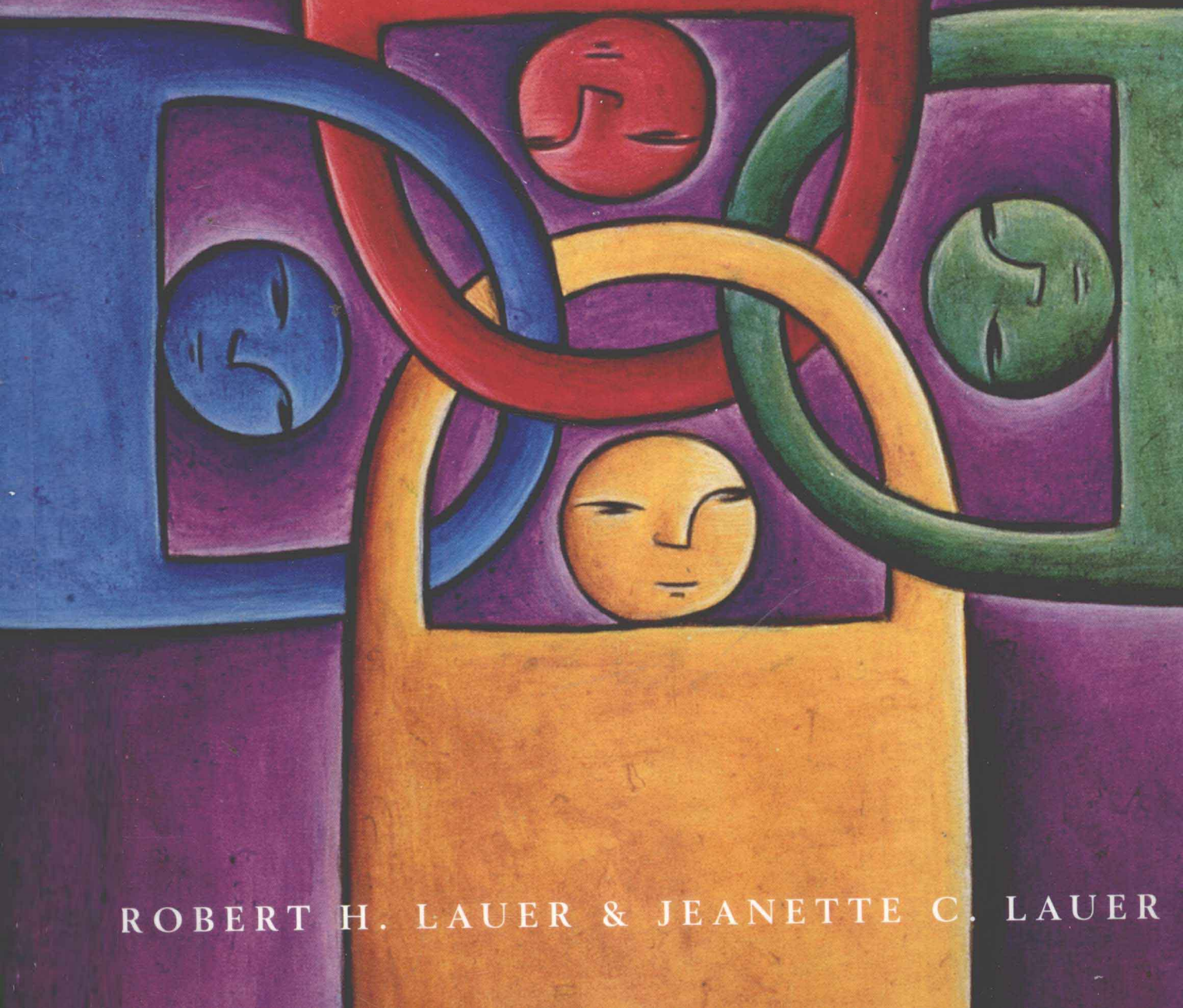


MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

THE QUEST FOR INTIMACY

FOURTH EDITION



ROBERT H. LAUER & JEANETTE C. LAUER

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To
*Jeffrey Mathew, Krista Julianne, Benjamin Brindle,
David Christopher, and John Robert,
Who are embarking on the quest*

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MARRIAGE AND FAMILY: THE QUEST FOR INTIMACY

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PREFACE

What do you want out of life? If you are like most Americans, you will probably include happiness in your answer. But where can you find happiness? We have titled this book *The Quest for Intimacy* because we believe your personal happiness is crucially tied up with the quality of your intimate relationships. Our purpose is to provide you not only with a basic understanding of marriage and family life, but to show you how you can apply the knowledge you gain to enrich your life.

In other words, this is not only a text but a practical guide as well. It is both basic and applied social science. The basic part comes in the wealth of information, based on the empirical work of hundreds of researchers. The applied part is found in the principles of intimacy that are specified in each chapter as well as in the “Personal,” “Comparison,” and “Involvement” inserts. Hopefully, by the time you complete this book, you will have a thorough understanding of marriage and family life today, including the ways in which they bear upon our experiences of intimacy; you will also have an understanding of steps you can take to enhance the quality of your own intimate relationships.

ORGANIZATION OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY: THE QUEST FOR INTIMACY

We have organized the book to answer a series of questions. What is the context in which intimate relationships occur? What is the meaning of intimate relationships and how do we establish them? What is the nature of intimacy for the married couple? What is the nature of intimacy in the family? What kinds of things threaten our intimate relationships, and how do people cope with those threats?

Part One addresses the context by identifying our beliefs and dreams, the diversity of family life, and the gender roles and sexuality that are

integral to intimacy. Part Two explores the meaning of intimate relationships and how we establish them. We discuss the process of getting involved with someone and falling in love. We also note the special case of those who remain single, and how they deal with their intimate relationships.

Part Three looks at the nature of, and problems with, intimacy for the married couple. We discuss such issues as making the transition from singlehood to marriage, communication, conflict, and work. In Part Four, we move to intimacy in the family, to the differences that children make in our intimate lives.

Finally, Part Five is an examination of various threats to our intimate relationships. Family crises, including alcoholism and violence as well as numerous other stressors, put strains on the family. Separation and divorce are one way of dealing with the strains. Those who do get divorced are most likely to remarry at some point, so the final chapter explores the reconstituted family.

SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE FOURTH EDITION

The World Wide Web has become a tool that can enrich our understanding of marriages and families around the world. The fourth edition takes full advantage of online resources with a new feature called the *Internet Connection* and a free *Making Connections: Family and Relationships Studies on the Internet*. These optional exercises, activities and resources allow students to explore and research topics and issues on the Web, providing students with opportunities to get involved. Additional exercises and resource URLs can be found on the book-specific Web site, www.mhhe.com/lauer4. Our thanks to Dr. Susan Hillier, Sonoma State University and Brian Gore, Prometheus Communications for creating the *Internet Connection* end-of-chapter material, book-specific Web site and accompanying booklet, the *Making Connections: Family and Relationships Studies on the Internet* as resources for students and instructors.

We have retained some important pedagogical aids in this edition, including learning objectives and a brief overview at the beginning of each chapter, and a summary at the end. Glossary terms are set in boldface type and defined in the glossary at the end of the book.

In addition, each chapter after the first has four inserts. The “Involvement” section has a project that provides you with some kind of personal involvement in an issue discussed in the chapter. The project is a way of taking the initiative in your own learning; it is a form of self-education. The usefulness of the projects may be enhanced if the entire class participates on a particular project; we give suggestions in most cases on how to do that.

The second type of insert is the “Personal” section. Each of these is an actual experience that has been shared with the authors by someone. We have changed the names, but the people and the circumstances are real. The “Personal” inserts illustrate some principle or principles in the chapters. They should help you grasp the principles better by seeing them at

work in a real situation. The “Personal” inserts could also form the basis for some interesting class discussions and analysis.

Third, each chapter has a “Perspective” insert, in which we turn to literature or historical materials, to give an additional perspective on some issue. It is important to see both how some aspects of intimate relations are similar and how other aspects vary across time. People are always tempted to think of a past time when things were so much “better” than they are today. You are likely to decide that some aspects were better and some were worse as you read about past practices and ideas.

Fourth, we have a Comparison. Our understanding is incomplete as long as we know only about our own society. In the “Comparison” insert, we examine some topic in each chapter in terms of what happens in one or more other societies in the world. The materials range from how certain Eskimo children learn to be male and female to how the Japanese divorce. These cross-cultural data reveal both similarities and differences with current American practices. Seeing the similarities makes us feel less alone, more a part of all humankind. Seeing the differences helps us become more tolerant and more appreciative of the rich diversity of humans.

This edition also retains an emphasis on theory, which is important for our understanding as well as giving directives in research. Many students question the usefulness of theory—“just give us the facts” is a frequent request. To show the importance of theory, we have included examples in each chapter of how the theories discussed in chapter 1 aid our understanding of various phenomena. Marginal notations identify where the theoretical explanations are located. To get a better grasp of the various theories and a better sense of how they are useful, the student can thumb through the various chapters and read each section where a theory is explicitly used.

Finally, we have made a number of changes. We have changed some of the inserts to provide newer or more useful information. We have added some new topics, such as body image and Internet romances. We have expanded some materials, including additional materials on cultural and racial/ethnic differences. And we have updated this addition throughout with the latest available information, incorporating the most recent research—more than 300 new references from the professional literature—and utilizing the most recent government data. The new references and government data, in addition to updating our knowledge about intimate relations, provide increasingly more information on racial and ethnic differences in intimate relations. This information, scattered throughout the book, shows how Americans of various racial and ethnic backgrounds have many similar and some dissimilar experiences in their intimate relationships.

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

The text is accompanied by several supplementary items that will help students better understand the issues involved in intimate relationships, and will help instructors in ensuring that their students achieve this goal.

Each new text is packaged with a free *Making Connections: Family and Relationships Studies on the Internet*, created by Dr. Susan Hillier, of Sonoma State University, Sonoma, California and Brian Gore, Prometheus Communications. This booklet gives readers a basic understanding of the Internet, valuable knowledge on becoming a savvy consumer of web information, and a substantial supply of various Web sites on organizations and careers in sociology.

A Web site with additional exercises, self-grading practice tests, and visuals to help you master the material in the text is also available at www.mhhe.com/Lauer4.

The *Student Study Guide*, written by Kenrick S. Thompson of Arkansas State University Mountain Home, provides students with material to review and test their comprehension of the text, as well as increase their awareness of the challenges and opportunities of intimacy and marriage. Inside, students will find, for every chapter, a list of key terms highlighted in the text, twenty fill-in-the-blank questions partly based on the terms, and twenty multiple-choice questions with answer keys. The Guide also contains "Personal Journals" which ask students to provide their written thoughts and feelings about various issues relating to intimate relationships, and "Workshops," which give students additional insight into some aspect of the chapter, then ask them to respond in the form of a written exercise.

The *Instructor's Manual*, also by Kenrick Thompson, contains chapter outlines, summaries, lists of electronic teaching aids, and at least four teaching enrichment ideas per chapter. The separate *Test Bank* and *Computerized Test Bank*, contain over 1000 multiple-choice questions that have been thoroughly revised and updated. *PowerPoint* slides are available for presentations.

The *McGraw-Hill Video Library* offers adopters a variety of current videos, suitable for classroom use in conjunction with the topics in the text.

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We are grateful to Susan Hillier and Brian Gore for creating the informative and stimulating Web exercises at the end of each chapter and for authoring the very valuable *Internet Guide to Families* that accompanies this edition of the text.

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