

# Marriages & Families

INTIMACY, DIVERSITY, AND STRENGTHS

Fifth Edition



David H. Olson  
John DeFrain

# Marriages & Families

Intimacy, Diversity,  
and Strengths

*Fifth Edition*

David H. Olson

*University of Minnesota*

John DeFrain

*University of Nebraska*



Boston Burr Ridge, IL Dubuque, IA Madison, WI New York  
San Francisco St. Louis Bangkok Bogotá Caracas Kuala Lumpur  
Lisbon London Madrid Mexico City Milan Montreal New Delhi  
Santiago Seoul Singapore Sydney Taipei Toronto



*This book about marriages and families is dedicated to our marriages and our families.*

MARRIAGES AND FAMILIES: INTIMACY, DIVERSITY, AND STRENGTHS

Published by McGraw-Hill, a business unit of The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 1221 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY, 10020. Copyright © 2006, 2003, 2000, 1997, 1994 by The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or distributed in any form or by any means, or stored in a database or retrieval system, without the prior written consent of The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., including, but not limited to, in any network or other electronic storage or transmission, or broadcast for distance learning. Some ancillaries, including electronic and print components, may not be available to customers outside the United States.

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 VNH/VNH 0 9 8 7 6 5

ISBN 0-07-298527-5

Editor in Chief: *Emily Barrosse*  
Publisher: *Phillip A. Butcher*  
Sponsoring Editor: *Sherith H. Pankratz*  
Developmental Editor: *Katherine Blake*  
Marketing Manager: *Dan Loch*  
Senior Project Manager: *Becky Komro*  
Designer: *Preston Thomas*  
Text Designer: *Ellen Pettengell*  
Cover Designer: *Ross Carron*  
Art Editor: *Katherine McNab*  
Senior Photo Research Coordinator:  
*Alexandra Ambrose*

Photo Researcher: *Emily Tietz*  
Cover Credits (clockwise from top left):  
© *Digital Vision*; © *Rob Lewine/Corbis*;  
© *Kevin Mackintosh/Getty Images/Stone*;  
© *Malcolm Beckford/Getty Images/Stone*  
Senior Production Supervisor: *Rich DeVitto*  
Media Producer: *Nancy Garcia*  
Composition: 9.5/12 *Palatino by TechBooks/GTS,*  
*York, PA*  
Printing: 45# *Publisher's Matte, Von Hoffmann*  
*Corporation*

Credits: The credits section for this book begins on page C-1 and is considered an extension of the copyright page.

The Internet addresses listed in the text were accurate at the time of publication. The inclusion of a Web site does not indicate an endorsement by the authors of McGraw-Hill, and McGraw-Hill does not guarantee the accuracy of the information presented at these sites.

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

Olson, David H. L.

Marriages and families: intimacy, diversity, and strengths / David H. Olson, John DeFraín.—5th ed.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-07-298527-5 (alk. paper)

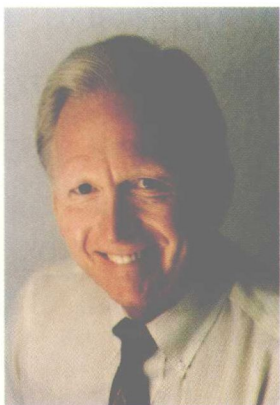
1. Family—United States—Psychological aspects. 2. Marriage—United States—Psychological aspects. 3. Intimacy (Psychology) I. DeFraín, John D. II. Title. HQ536.O46 2006

306.8'0973—dc22

2005049231



# About the Authors



## **David H. Olson, Ph.D.**

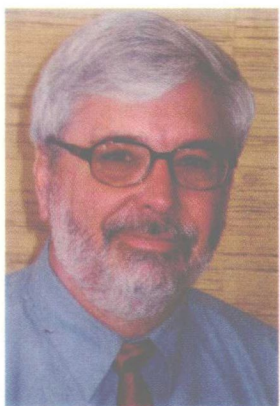
David Olson is professor emeritus of family social science at the University of Minnesota, where he has been for more than 25 years. He is founder and president of Life Innovations. He is a past president of the National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) and a past president of the Upper Midwest Association for Marriage and Family Therapists (UMAMFT).

He is a fellow and clinical member of the American Association for Marital and Family Therapy (AAMFT) and a fellow of the American Psychological Association (APA). Olson is also a member of the editorial boards of six family journals. He has received numerous awards, including the Distinguished Contribution to Family Therapy Research Award from both AAMFT and the American Family Therapy Association (AFTA).

Olson has written or edited more than 20 books, including *Empowering Couples*, *Building Relationships*, *Families: What Makes Them Work*, *Circumplex Model*, *Power in Families*, *Treating Relationships*, and 10 volumes of the *Inventory of Marriage and Family Literature*. He has published more than 100 articles with the theme of bridging family research, theory, and practice.

Olson and his colleagues at the University of Minnesota have developed the Circumplex Model of Marital and Family Systems and a variety of couple and family assessment tools, including PREPARE, ENRICH, FACES, PAIR, and AWARE.

He is happily married to Karen Olson, who has provided companionship and support throughout this and numerous other projects. They have three terrific children (Hans, Amy, and Chris), a great son-in-law (Daniel) and daughter-in-law (Shelly), and five wonderful grandchildren (Adrienne, Evan, Chelsea, Alex, and Ava). Olson has been blessed with a fun-loving and caring family that continues to sustain and support him.



## **John DeFrain, Ph.D.**

John DeFrain is an extension professor of family and community development at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and has focused his professional energy for the past 35 years in better understanding how families learn to live happily together. He received his doctorate from the University of Wisconsin–Madison in 1975, and has been on the faculty of UNL for more than 30 years. He has experience as a newspaper reporter and preschool and kindergarten teacher and has codirected a graduate training program in marriage and family therapy.

He cofounded the National and International Symposium on Building Family Strengths, which grew into a consortium of groups organizing 35 allied conferences in the United States and around the world since 1978. Recent gatherings



have been held in Australia, China, and Korea, and upcoming conferences are planned for southern Africa, the Middle East, the Mediterranean, and the United States. His research with a team of investigators around the world has collected data on family strengths from 21,000 family members in 27 countries.

DeFrain has served as consultant to courts, universities, churches, agencies, and individual families on marriage, parenting, grief, divorce, and child custody issues. As an extension specialist, he works with a variety of agencies and organizations and is regularly invited to talk about families to groups and in the media. He recently received the Outstanding New Extension Family Specialist Award from the National Extension Family Specialists Association meeting in Vancouver, B.C., Canada, and the MISS Foundation Phoenix Award for service to bereaved parents who have lost children, at the foundation's annual meeting in Arizona.

He has coauthored more than 60 professional articles on family issues and 18 books, including *Secrets of Strong Families*; *Sudden Infant Death: Enduring the Loss*; *Stillborn: The Invisible Death*; *On Our Own: A Single Parent's Survival Guide*; *Building Relationships*; and *Parents in Contemporary America: A Sympathetic View*. He is currently working on a number of new book projects: *The Family Strengths Perspective: Strong Families Around the World*; *The Dark Thread: Surviving and Transcending a Traumatic Childhood*; and *Creating Strong Marriages and Families: A Strengths-Based Activity Book*.

He and his wife and best friend, Nikki DeFrain, M.S., have three grown daughters connected to two sons-in-law and a great boyfriend-in-law, and a grandson. Nikki was especially important in the development and writing of this textbook, offering support in innumerable areas of the project and expertise in her own areas of study: life span human development in a family context and, especially, young children and older people. The DeFrains are very interested in understanding family strengths and challenges from a global perspective, and have learned about family relationships in 17 countries. They are currently working on various projects with the University of Newcastle, N.S.W., Australia; the Korean Institute of Family Strengths in Seoul, Republic of Korea; the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences in the People's Republic of China; and the Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social (CIESAS) in Mexico.

# Preface

Our colleague and friend, the late Dr. David R. Mace, once said, “Nothing in the world could make human life happier than to greatly increase the number of happy couples and strong families.” Throughout five editions, our goal in writing *Marriages and Families: Intimacy, Diversity, and Strengths* has been to provide students with information about marriage and family relationships that will help them move toward Mace’s goal.

We have tried to make the concepts and ideas presented in this book useful and meaningful so students will be able to apply them to their own lives. We hope to help students integrate intellectual ideas and personal experiences, thereby enriching both. Although the text deals with some complex ideas and materials, it is written in a style that is accessible to students new to the field of family studies and to those wanting to learn more about intimate relationships.

## Intimacy, Strengths, and Diversity

Three distinctive themes have guided our efforts in writing this book, and they are woven throughout the text. The first is intimacy, and our focus is on how to develop and maintain close relationships. Most people seek connectedness and want to be involved in intimate relationships, the most intimate being marriage and family. This book is full of ideas, principles, and suggestions for building and keeping intimate relationships in your life. As a result, this is a book that you will want to keep and refer to throughout your life.

The second key theme is marital and family strengths. The family strengths perspective is based on the premise that if you approach relationships from a “problem” perspective, you will find problems. If you look for strengths, you will find strengths. Growing numbers of family educators and family therapists are using this approach today, helping families recognize their own strengths and use them as a foundation for positive growth. In Chapter 1, we identify a number of strengths that have been found to be present in healthy marriages and families all over the world. Throughout the book, we show how these strengths help families provide healthy and nurturing settings that promote the growth and well-being of individual family members, better enabling them to face the challenges and solve the problems they encounter.

Although the theme of family strengths is integrated throughout the book, three chapters focus especially on this theme: Chapter 2 highlights the couple and family strengths of diverse ethnic and cultural groups; Chapter 14, “Stress Abuse, and Family Problems,” examines how families can use their strengths to manage stress, abuse, and other family issues; and Chapter 16, “Strengthening Marriages and Families,” looks at how families and societies can work together to build healthier societies in the future.



The third key theme is diversity and, wherever possible, we consider how concepts, research, and theories about the family apply to couples and families of diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. We also focus on the diversity in structure that characterizes families today, looking at the many different forms that “family” can take. Diversity in sexual orientation—gay and lesbian relationships and families in our society—is a third type of diversity we explore. The theme of diversity is introduced in Chapter 1, “Perspectives on Intimate Relationships,” discussed in detail in Chapter 2, “Cultural Diversity: Family Strengths and Challenges,” and integrated into discussions throughout the book. One of the four categories of the box program is dedicated to exploring “Diversity in Families.”

## Family Systems and Family Strengths

We present many theories of family in this book, but we focus especially on family systems theory. Recognizing that the family unit is a system of interdependent parts, we look at how families maintain themselves, yet change; how family members can be separate, yet connected; and how communication facilitates the processes of change and growth. We focus on communication and conflict resolution skills as essential tools for creating healthy intimate relationships. We also look at how families can learn to function well within the larger systems of community and society.

The family strengths perspective was developed by Nick Stinnett, John DeFrain, and many of their colleagues across the country. We use this perspective throughout the text as a model for understanding and evaluating families. With it we identify and focus on six key qualities of healthy families: commitment, appreciation and affection, positive communication, enjoyable time together, spiritual well-being, and the ability to cope with stress and crisis. The research driving this model has involved thousands of family members in the United States and other countries around the world.

In Chapter 3, “Understanding Marriage and Family Dynamics,” we introduce the Couple and Family Map, an assessment tool that was developed by David Olson and his colleagues. The Couple and Family Map is based on concepts from family systems theory, and it focuses on the three dimensions of cohesion, flexibility, and communication. It has been used in hundreds of studies to help researchers understand and evaluate families. Throughout the text, we cite studies that have used the map as a theoretical base. An ongoing family case study, described in the Instructor’s Manual, can be used to show students how the Couple and Family Map is applied. Appendix A contains the instructions and materials to apply the map to couple and family relationships.

## Changes in the Fifth Edition

A good textbook is like a healthy couple or family. It grows and changes in positive directions over the years. Although the fourth edition of *Marriages and Families: Intimacy, Strengths, and Diversity* was published just 3 years ago, this fifth edition incorporates a number of improvements, many of them based on the suggestions of students and instructors. The most notable changes include the following:

- A **new design**, which enhances the visual appeal and makes the contents more navigable.
- The **box program** has been reorganized and is now arranged into four thematic categories: “Self-Assessment” (allowing students to test



themselves); “Putting It Together” (providing students with skill-building tools); “At Issue” (focusing on topical issues affecting individuals and their relationships); and “Diversity in Families” (examining marriage and family issues across cultures and around the world).

- A number of topics are covered in **greater depth**:
  - Conceptual frameworks in marriage and family studies
  - The social environment and its influence on couples and families
  - Demographic change and increasing diversity
  - Cultural diversity
  - Singlehood
  - Gender roles and power
  - Cohabitation (including a new Self-Assessment box on “How Realistic Are Your Ideas about Cohabitation?”)
  - Parenting
  - The child care controversy
  - The middle and later years of the family life cycle
  - Stress, abuse, and family problems and how they are overcome
  - Techniques for building stronger marriages and families
- We have added **new sections/subsections**, including the following:
  - “Everybody Loves Raymond” and “The Osbournes” as current examples of media portrayals of family dynamics (Chapter 3)
  - “Sexual Behavior, Alcohol, and College” (Chapter 6)
  - “ABC News Survey” (2004) on American Sexual Behavior (Chapter 6)
  - “Asian American Culture” in the gender roles chapter (7)
  - Credit Card abuse (especially relating to college students) (Chapter 8)
  - “Jealousy: A Green-Eyed Monster or Real Love?” (Chapter 9)
  - “Interracial and Interfaith Marriages” (Chapter 10)
  - “Single Mothers by Choice” (Chapter 12)
  - “When a Child Dies” (Chapter 12)
  - “Increasing Divorce during the Middle Years” (Chapter 13)
- The personal stories that appeared in the fourth edition as drop-in screened boxes have been redesigned. They are now integrated within the text as excerpts, and introduced in the preceding narrative so that their relevance is more explicit. These excerpts provide **personal observations or accounts**, and bridge the gap between concept and “real life.” They illustrate family dynamics in a variety of situations, settings, and life stages, touching on such issues as single parenting, sexual intimacy, family violence, managing money, dividing chores, expressing emotions, and adjusting to the death of a family member. They are intended to help students realize how much they share with families elsewhere.
- We have added an **Appendix on “Pregnancy and Childbirth.”** This is a revision of an appendix that appeared in an earlier edition of the book.

The field of family science continues to grow dramatically. We have updated this text to include the most current statistics and cutting-edge research studies. More than 450 new sources are cited in this volume. Since the publication of the previous edition, every new issue of 13 major marriage and family, child development, family therapy, psychology, sociology, and social work journals has been studied intensively in the search for the latest research and thinking on critical issues. Journals and professional resources included in this search include *Journal*

of *Marriage and Family*, *Family Relations*, *Marriage and Family Review*, *Journal of Family Issues*, *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, *National Council on Family Relations Report*, *Child Development*, *Journal of Family Psychology*, *Family Process*, *Families and Society*, *The American Psychologist*, *American Psychological Association Monitor*, and *The Family Psychologist*.

All previously cited sources have been reviewed and updated, relying on literally hundreds of thousands of publications catalogued in the massive *Family and Society Studies Worldwide* and *PsychINFO* databases. Regular visits were also made to myriad Web sites, including: Library of Congress; U.S. Bureau of the Census; Statistical Abstracts of the United States; Alliance for Children and Families; Child Trends; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; National Institutes of Health; Alan Guttmacher Institute; Family Studies DataBiblioline; National Opinion Research Center; U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence; U.S. Office of Justice; and Google.

## Content and Organization

We have written this text for students who are interested in learning more about themselves, their family, and their close relationships. Each chapter provides a comprehensive look at salient issues. Each chapter contains a chapter outline, a chapter summary, activities, a list of terms, and suggested readings.

An awareness of how the book is organized is a prerequisite to using it successfully. Because of the growing complexity of the marriage and family field, the three chapters in Part I, "The Social Context of Intimate Relationships," emphasize the critical themes of diversity and strengths and their centrality to the subject of marriage and family. Chapter 1, "Perspectives on Intimate Relationships," includes the realities of marriage and family life today, definitions of marriage and family, and trends in marriage and the family field. Chapter 2, "Cultural Diversity: Family Strengths and Challenges," discusses the nature of cultural diversity; family strengths, stereotypes, and challenges in various ethnic and cultural groups; and issues in cross-cultural family studies. In Chapter 3, "Understanding Marriage and Family Dynamics," the various conceptual frameworks used in the field are reviewed. The major focus is on family systems and family strengths, but other frameworks are also described, including family development, symbolic interaction, social construction, and the feminist framework. In addition, the importance of three family system dimensions—cohesion, flexibility, and communication—are described.

In Part II we emphasize the "Dynamics of Intimate Relationships." Chapter 4, "Communication and Intimacy," begins with perspectives on communication and use of communication to develop and maintain intimacy. Chapter 5, "Conflict and Conflict Resolution," outlines the hierarchy of conflict in intimate relationships, notes the relationship between intimacy and conflict, and discusses ways to resolve conflict successfully. In Chapter 6, "Sexual Intimacy," the focus is on sex and society, American sexual behavior as uncovered by various surveys, sex education, premarital sexual behavior, marital and extramarital sexual behavior, and how couples can move toward sexual health. The discussion in Chapter 7, "Gender Roles and Power in the Family," begins with traditional and contemporary views of gender roles, continues on to theories of gender-role development and change, and ends with a discussion of power in families. Chapter 8, "Managing Economic



Resources," discusses the stresses related to family financial issues, why finances cause family problems, family income and expenses, the process of family financial resource management, and uses and abuses of credit in our society.

Part III, "Stages of Intimate Relationships," provides a foundation for understanding how individuals pair up and move toward intimate and committed relationships. Chapter 9, "Friendship, Intimacy, and Singlehood," explores the differences between friends and lovers, how people move from intimate experiences to intimate relationships, intimacy games people play, and the pros and cons of being single. Chapter 10, "Dating, Mate Selection, and Living Together," begins with an overview of the American dating system and the limitations of this system for selecting a mate. The growing prevalence of living together is addressed along with a review of its impact on marriage. Various theories of mate selection are also described.

Chapter 11, "Marriage: Building a Strong Foundation," has been expanded to include more research on the positive benefits of marriage. The chapter provides a formula for a successful marriage, explores positive and negative reasons for marrying, and describes the importance of premarital education. The challenges of the newlywed years are described along with a new typology of couples. Chapter 12, "Parenthood: Choices and Challenges," begins with a discussion of the challenge of parenthood and ends with a discussion of various important issues in parenting. Styles of parenting are described along with the consequences of these styles. The important issue of discipline is discussed in depth. Chapter 13, "Midlife and Older Couples," discusses family life in the middle years, including sexuality, middle-aged marriage, empty or spacious nests, the sandwich generation, and grandparenthood; the discussion of family life in the later years focuses on definitions of old age, conventional wisdom about aging, retirement, family dynamics and the aging couple, and losing a spouse.

Part IV, "Challenges and Opportunities," focuses on various family challenges. Chapter 14, "Stress, Abuse, and Family Problems," looks at cultural perspectives on family stress, the curvilinear nature of stress, stressors families face, family stress theory, and family coping strategies. An overview of family problems includes a focus on physical abuse and violence, in addition to neglect. The chapter ends with a discussion of alcoholism and abuse of other drugs. Chapter 15, "Divorce, Single-Parent Families, and Stepfamilies," begins with a description of our divorce culture and the impact it is having on individuals, particularly children and society. The single-parent families and stepfamilies section looks at the changing picture of the family; single-parent families from a strengths perspective and stepfamilies from a strengths perspective are discussed. Chapter 16, the concluding chapter of the text, is entitled "Strengthening Marriages and Families." We begin with a discussion of the future of families from a global perspective. The chapter then focuses on personal strategies to strengthen marriage and family relationships. It describes how we can work together in our communities to help marriages and families succeed in life's most important task: creating healthy, satisfying, and close relationships.

The goal of a marriage or of a family must be more than simply to survive; it must be to thrive. Couples and families must be proactive rather than reactive in dealing with ongoing relationship issues. Strong relationships, strong marriages, and strong families require time, energy, and commitment. The rewards of these investments include an enhanced and healthy emotional and physical life for every family member. Finally, strong families also provide the foundation for a strong and caring society.



# Ancillary Materials

The fifth edition of *Marriages and Families: Intimacy, Diversity, and Strengths* is accompanied by a number of supplementary learning and teaching aids.

## For the Student

**Student's Online Learning Center (OLC).** The Online Learning Center Web site that accompanies this text offers a variety of resources for the student. In addition to various study tools, students will find chapter objectives, chapter summaries, interactive chapter quizzes, annotated lists of Web links, Internet exercises, flashcards of key terms, and census updates. Please visit the text OLC site at [www.mhhe.com/Olson5](http://www.mhhe.com/Olson5).

**PowerWeb.** PowerWeb, a password-protected Web site, allows students to supplement their learning experience using Internet-based course materials. It includes current articles, curriculum-based materials, weekly updates with assessment, informative and timely world news, refereed Web links, research tools, student study tools, interactive exercises, and more.

**Reel Families Interactive Movie CD-ROM.** Available as a separate package option, *Reel Families* is a professionally produced, interactive movie on CD-ROM that demonstrates concepts and issues that are important in the study of marriages and families. Each viewer assumes the role of one of the characters and influences key plot turns by making choices for them.

## For the Instructor

The Instructor's Manual, Test Bank, Computerized Test Bank, and PowerPoint slides are available to instructors on the **Instructor's Resource CD-ROM (IRCD)**.

**Instructor's Manual.** For each chapter of the text, the Instructor's Manual provides a chapter outline, learning objectives, a chapter summary, a list of key terms, lecture notes, suggested activities, and suggested readings. The manual also includes a description of the AWARE Inventory with guidelines for using it; strategies for using Family Quads (groups of four students who meet throughout the course) in classes; and instructions for the Family Case Study assignments. The Instructor's Manual also can be downloaded from the Instructor's Online Learning Center.

**Test Bank.** The Test Bank, significantly revised and expanded, offers multiple-choice, true/false, short-answer, and essay questions for each chapter in the text. The Test Bank can be downloaded as a Word file from the IRCD. It is also available on the IRCD as a **Computerized Test Bank**.

**PowerPoint Slides.** A collection of tables and figures from the text, augmented by additional graphics, allows instructors to add visual content to their lectures. The PowerPoint slides are also available on the Instructor's Online Learning Center.

**Instructor's Online Learning Center (OLC).** Password-protected, the Instructor's side of the OLC offers chapter objectives, chapter summaries, interactive chapter quizzes, annotated lists of Web links, Internet exercises, flashcards of key

terms, and census updates. The Instructor's Manual, PowerPoint slides, and more can be accessed electronically on this site, [www.mhhe.com/olson5](http://www.mhhe.com/olson5).

**PowerWeb.** PowerWeb, a password-protected Web site, allows students to supplement their learning experience using Internet-based course materials. It includes current articles, curriculum-based materials, weekly updates with assessment, informative and timely world news, refereed Web links, research tools, student study tools, interactive exercises, and more.

**AWARE.** AWARE, an acronym for **A**wareness of **A**ttitudes and **R**elationship Expectations, is an inventory focused on relationship issues. It was specifically developed by David Olson and his colleagues for marriage and family classes to help personalize the class for each student and to involve each student actively in the class.

After students have completed the AWARE Inventory, a 13-page personal report is provided for each student, comparing the student's responses with those of family professionals. The instructor also receives a 13-page AWARE Summary Computer Report, comparing the responses of the students in a class with those family professionals. The two reports are designed to help generate discussion on items about which students agree and disagree with family professionals.

The AWARE Inventory is designed to be administered the first day of class (or very soon thereafter) using the AWARE question booklets and answer sheets. Instructors should first obtain an identification number by using the following URL for an Online Registration Form: <http://www.awarequiz.com>.

The completed student answer sheets are collected by the instructor and sent to Life Innovations to be computer scored. The questionnaires are processed within a 12-hour timeframe and returned via two-day shipping.

**PageOut: The Course Website Development Center.** Online content for *Marriages and Families* is supported by WebCT, eCollege.com, Blackboard, and other course management systems. Additionally, McGraw-Hill's PageOut service is available to help instructors get their course up and running online in a matter of hours, at no cost. (No programming knowledge is required.) When you use PageOut, your students have instant, 24-hour access to your course syllabus, lecture notes, assignments, and other original material. Students can even check their grades on-line. Material from the Online Learning Center (OLC) can be pulled into your Web site. PageOut also provides a discussion board where you and your students can exchange questions and post announcements. To find out more about PageOut, ask your McGraw-Hill representative for details, or go to <http://www.mhhe.com/pageout>.

## Acknowledgments

We are very grateful to the following reviewers for providing us with their helpful comments and suggestions during the development of the fifth edition: Manijeh Daneshpour, St. Cloud State University; Gregory Hickman, The Pennsylvania State University-Fayette; Tommie Lawhon, University of North Texas; Doris Sikora, Western Kentucky University; and Michael Walcheski, Concordia University-St. Paul.

David Olson  
John DeFrain

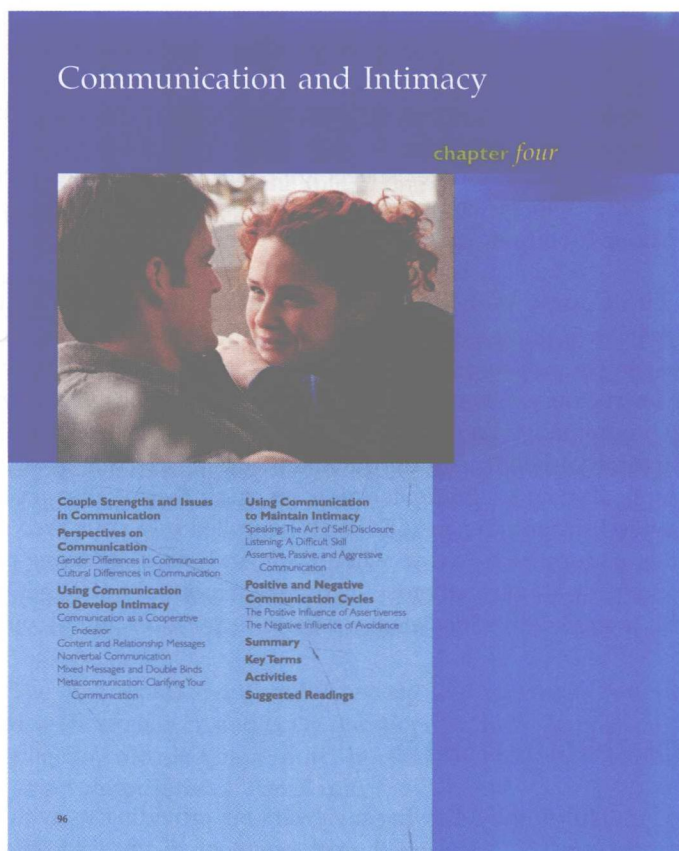


# a visual preview

Olson and DeFrain offer students an easy-to-comprehend introduction to the couple and family field. They take a positive approach, focusing on intimacy and diversity from a strengths-based, multidisciplinary perspective. This is reflected in their pedagogy. They present concepts and ideas in a useful and meaningful manner that enables students to *apply* them to their lives.

## Chapter Opener and Outline

Each chapter opens with an outline of the major chapter headings, allowing students to preview at a glance the material to be covered.



## Thematic Box Program

The box program has been redesigned and is now organized into four thematic categories that promote and strengthen the authors' emphasis on intimacy, diversity, and strengths.





### Box 2.1 Self-Assessment Rate the Strengths in Your Family

This Family Strengths Inventory was developed by researchers who have studied strengths as perceived by more than 2,000 family members in 27 countries. Put an "S" for strengths beside the qualities you feel your family has achieved, and a "G" beside those qualities which are an area of potential growth. If the particular characteristic does not apply to your family or is not a characteristic that is important to you, put an "NA" for not applicable.

- 1. We enjoy expressing appreciation and affection for each other.
- 2. We are committed to our well-being as a family and the well-being of each individual.
- 3. Communication is usually positive, straightforward, and honest.
- 4. We share an adequate amount of enjoyable time together.
- 5. We share beliefs and a sense of purpose.
- 6. We see challenges as opportunities for growth.

- 7. We love one another.
- 8. Life in our family is satisfying to us.
- 9. We are happy as a family.
- 10. All things considered, we are a strong family.

#### How Can a Family Use This Inventory?

Partners or family members can fill out a copy of this Family Strengths Inventory separately, and then share their answers with each other. If discussed in a positive manner, they will be able to identify those areas they would like to work on together to improve, and those areas of strength which will serve as the foundation for their growth and positive change together.

Below are some suggestions from psychologist Richard B. Stuart to help you improve your communications skills.

1. *The foundation of all communication is effective listening.* There are a number of ways to enhance one's listening skills:
  - a. Face your partner and maintain eye contact if at all possible.
  - b. Provide appropriate nonverbal feedback—nod, smile, frown, and so forth.
  - c. Don't interrupt; wait for the person to complete her or his message; avoid unsolicited advice, comments, and criticism.
  - d. Use the "two-question" approach: Ask a question; listen to the answer; ask a second question in response to the answer. Following up on what the person is saying shows that you are interested.
  - e. Use "how," "what," "where," and "when" questions instead of concentrating on "whys."
  - f. The goal of questions is to better understand the other person's point of view, not to interrogate the person so blame can be affixed.
  - g. Make sure your biases don't interfere with your listening skills.

2. *Take responsibility for your messages by using "I" statements and avoiding statements beginning with "you."*
3. *Make constructive requests which seek to change the way you interact with the other person.* Requests should:
  - a. Begin with "I would like..." statements.
  - b. Call for positive actions.
  - c. Be respectful by using words like "please."
  - d. Be couched in the language of wants rather than needs.
4. *Consistently praise your partner for fulfilling your requests, and be sure to respond to your partner's requests.*
5. *Offer each other ongoing, positive feedback.* Negative feedback is likely to make things worse, but positive information will probably help keep the relationship open to positive change.
6. *Clarify your understanding of what your partner is saying by relating what you have heard or seen in your own words; ask your partner to confirm if you are understanding correctly.*



### Box 8.2 At Issue The Credit Card Trap and How to Avoid It

College campuses today are practically overrun with credit cards. Some banks offer free T-shirts, water bottles, umbrellas, or other incentives to encourage students to sign up for their cards. Actually, many students already have cards before they ever set foot in a college dorm. In his report, "Credit Cards on Campus," Dr. Robert D. Manning (Manning, 2001) notes that "... companies are approving credit lines for student at progressively earlier ages, including high school seniors. Most college freshmen now receive their first credit card before taking their first mid-term exam." And no wonder—marketing these cards to students is now a billion-dollar business, and there is no sign of a slowdown.

Having a credit card in hand makes it so easy, so convenient, to shop for clothes, eat out with friends, and enjoy the good life. But such convenience often comes at quite a price, and every year thousands of college students find themselves caught in the credit trap.

Here are some surprising statistics about college credit card users:

- In 2003, 54% of freshman students carried a credit card. By sophomore year, that number rose to 92% (Lazarony, 2002).
- 47% of college students have four or more credit cards (Lazarony, 2002).
- Between freshman orientation and graduation, students double their credit card debt and triple

number of credit cards in their wallets (Lazarony, 2002).

- Three out of five students reached or exceeded their credit cards' limits during their freshman year (Singletary, 2003).
- Almost three-quarters of students used their student loans to pay credit card bills (Singletary, 2003).
- Student credit card holders are more likely (12.1%) to be more than 30 days late in paying their bills, as compared to older adult card holders (8.1%) (Singletary, 2004).

There are many reasons students get into trouble with credit cards. One reason is that banks and credit companies, which used to require parental approval for student cards, no longer do so. Some teens, out from under parental authority for the first time and enjoying the sense of financial freedom that having their own credit card gives them, fail to realize the consequences of letting their spending get out of hand.

Another reason, according to James A. Roberts, associate



### Box 9.2 Diversity in Families New Definitions of Singlehood

Being unmarried in the United States, as well as in most other industrialized countries, is not what it used to be—especially for women. Only recently have the words "spinster" and "old maid" gone out of fashion. In the 1950s, for instance, if a young woman wasn't married by the age of 25, she was considered an oddity and was likely to be pitied. Most people were married soon after they graduated from high school or college. It's a different story today. According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census (2002), the median age for getting married is 25.3 for women (compared to 20.8 in 1970 and 26.9 for men).

In an article entitled "Singles Shall Overcome," Bella De Paulo (2004) reports that there are 86 million unmarried people now living in the United States, which represents more than 40 percent of the adult population. For U.S. women, singlehood has its upsides and its downsides. On a positive note, increases in education and income have made single women the second largest category of buyers of condos, co-ops, townhouses, and single-family homes. RealEstateJournal.com (2004), an online division of *The Wall Street Journal*, reported in November of 2004 that 21% of home buyers were single women (up from 15% in 1993), whereas only 11% were single men.

However, the news for single women is not all good. Single women are often caught in the middle of two worlds. Like the four women on "Sex and the City," they enjoy the freedom and sense of adventure that comes with being unmarried, yet they spend much of their time searching for the perfect relationship. In an article in the *Journal of Mental Health Counseling*, Phyllis A. Gordon (2003) states that society does not prepare women for singlehood, and that "from an early age, most young girls are

prompted to think of an adult life that encompasses marriage and motherhood." She also says that although it is fairly acceptable for a man to remain single, women who do so are usually seen as less loving and nurturing, less sexually attractive, and more selfish. They often see themselves as being "less than," as lacking something fundamental, and they frequently experience low self-esteem. Many women feel great societal pressure to be part of a couple.

Traditionally, people married to fulfill parental expectations, for social and economic security, and for religious reasons. Contemporary reasons for getting—or not getting—married are often more personal and include the rise of feminism and the sexual revolution, the fact that many young people are staying in school longer to earn graduate degrees, and the cultural changes that affect the way people search for mates. Many people are no longer as concerned about meeting society's expectations.

That is not to say that intimacy is not still an important issue. Many young adults are postponing marriage until they find that one individual who is just right for them. According to Whitehead and Popert (2001) in a report for the National Marriage Project at Rutgers University, young adults are "searching for a deep emotional and spiritual connection with one person for life." The authors went on to say that 94% of never-married men and women ages 20–29 are searching for their soul mates "first and foremost."

In a global context, waiting for Mr. Right is a particularly Western notion. In other places around the world, marriage is often seen as an alliance between families for racial, political, or economic reasons. Below are views of singlehood in several Asian countries:

## Putting It Together Boxes

These boxes provide students with skills-building tools to help them in the development and maintenance of personal and family relationships.

## At Issue Boxes

These boxes focus on topical issues affecting individuals and their relationships.

## Diversity in Families Boxes

These boxes examine marriage and family issues across cultures and around the world.

# Personal Observations and Accounts

Integrated throughout the chapters as excerpts, these personal observations and accounts help to bridge the gap between the concepts discussed and real-life experiences. They illustrate family dynamics in a variety of situations, settings, and life stages, touching upon such issues as single parenting, sexual intimacy, family violence, managing money, dividing chores, expressing emotions, and adjusting to the death of a family member. They are intended to help students realize how much they share with families elsewhere.

As an example of a morphostatic system, consider the following story. By failing to deal openly and effectively with their relationship problems, Katherine and Ken are beginning a free fall into despair. They are an example of a morphostatic family system, unable or unwilling to change. A morphogenic system, one open to growth and change, might have been able to prevent such a scenario.

*Ken and Katherine have been married for 15 years. Ken is an alcoholic, though he manages to hold onto his job as a floor supervisor at a printing plant. Ken has been having an extramarital affair with Winona, a co-worker at the plant, for 6 months. When Katherine discovers the affair, she tells Ken she is leaving him. He responds by begging for forgiveness and promising to give up the relationship with Winona.*

*He wants to avoid divorce for a number of reasons: embarrassment at work, shame in his extended family, and financial consequences. Besides, although the thrill is gone from the marriage, he and Katherine have a long history together, and she is a good mother to their three children. Katherine is skeptical about Ken's promises. She tells him that she wants him to give up drinking as well. He says he can control his drinking and just drink "socially." He doesn't really need to go "cold turkey," he argues.*

*Katherine remains skeptical; she has heard such arguments many times before. In spite of her skepticism, however, Katherine decides to forgive Ken, as she has before, and to stay. She genuinely loves him, even though she hates his drinking and, now, his seeing another woman. And he provides a good income for her and the children. Katherine also fears being on her own, both socially and financially. She dreads the thought of going back into the workplace after so many years at home. Whatever she has now, she feels, is better than what she would have as a divorced mother of three.*

The family systems framework assumes that systems operate on a continuum from extreme morphostasis to extreme morphogenesis. In a healthy system, there is a balance between these extremes. The couple or family needs to be open to change, but not to the point of being rootless or chaotic. Conversely, it needs to be centered and stable, but not to the point of being rigid.

## Summary

- The family today is not in danger of extinction, but it is changing. The American family is more diverse today, in terms of family structure and ethnicity, than ever before.
- About half the people marrying today will probably divorce at some time in their lives, often because they enter marriage with unrealistic expectations, marry the wrong person, marry for the wrong reasons, or have too much to deal with the many challenges of marriage.
- Marriage is the emotional and legal commitment of two people to share emotional and physical intimacy, various tasks, and economic resources. A family is two or more people who are committed to each other and who share intimacy, resources, decision-making responsibilities, and values.
- Some of the major trends in family structure, marriage, divorce, and remarriage are the following: There are both more families headed by single women and more stepfamilies today than there were in the 1950s and 1960s; families are smaller today; women are more likely to work outside the home after marriage; both men and women are marrying at a later age; cohabitation is becoming more common; and more people are getting remarried.
- Human beings do not live and love in a vacuum. Besides being connected to special people in our lives, we are inextricably embedded in our social environment. As individuals, couples, and families, we have little influence on society, but society has a great deal of influence on our personal attitudes and behaviors.
- There are many elements in our social environment that pose difficult challenges for couples and families. These include stress, change and transitions, lack of time for oneself and significant others; the increasing use of child care outside the family; instability of couples and family relationships; violence; a sexually charged society; the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs; the Internet's effects on human relationships; changing gender roles and the balance of power in intergenerational relationships; cultural migration and overcrowding; and financial problems and the effects of the global economy on families.
- Surveys over the years indicate that the majority of Americans think their marriages and families are doing pretty well and that their lives are generally satisfying.

## Activities

1. In small groups, write down your own definition of the family. Share your responses within the group, and compare how your ideas are similar and/or different.
2. What is your definition of marriage? After writing your definition, compare it with the definition used in this book.
3. Interview a grandparent or a great-grandparent (or another older person you would like to get to know better about family life in "the old days"—both positive and negative aspects. Some interesting areas to explore might be: (1) growing up in a family; (2) a "romantic phase" in the world; (3) more years ago; (4) gender roles; (5) the Great Depression of the 1930s; (6) World War II; (7) major family crises; (7) religion; and (8) philosophy of child rearing.
4. What are the major stresses in your social environment? Make a list and discuss it with others. How did you deal effectively with these stresses?

## Suggested Readings

- Bryant, L. & Bryant, J. A. (2003). *Intention and the American family* (2nd ed.). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Duncan, G. J., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (Eds.). (1997). *The consequences of growing up poor*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Evans, R. E., & Lawrence-Billing, L. (1988). An overview of the status, causes, and consequences of divorce family relationships. *American Psychologist*, 43(2), 120-128.
- Frank, R. H. (1988). *Why money fails in society and in our lives*. New York: Free Press.

- Freud, S. (1967). *Beyond gender: The new politics of work and family*. Washington, DC: The Woodrow Wilson Center Press, Brookings.
- Gottman, J. M., & DeCato, J. (2003). *The relationship cure: A 30-day guide to building better connections with family, friends, and lovers*. New York: Crown.
- Gottman, J. M., & Silver, N. (1990). *The seven principles for making marriage work*. New York: Crown Publishers.
- Krout, R., Patterson, M., Lundmark, V., Kistler, S., Makinlay, T., & Schmitt, W. (1988). Internet paradox: A social technology that reduces social involvement and psychological well-being? *American Psychologist*, 43(9), 1077-1081.
- Popenoe, D., & Whitehead, B. D. (1999). *The state of our unions*. New Jersey: National Marriage Project. (Event last summary of key social indicators of marriage and family in the United States).
- Shedden, C. B., & Bokemeier, J. L. (2003). Myths and realities of raising children and creating family life in a rural county. *Journal of Family Issues*, 23(1), 17-46.
- Steinbock, B., Greenfield, P., Kistler, R., & Gross, E. (2003). The impact of computer use on children's and adolescents' development. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 23(1), 7-30.
- White, L. L., & Gallagher, M. (2003). *The case for marriage*. New York: Doubleday.

Visit the text-specific Online Learning Center at [www.oxley.com/oxley](http://www.oxley.com/oxley) for practice tests, chapter summaries, Web links, Internet exercises, key terms, and flashcards.

# Chapter Summaries

Each chapter concludes with a bulleted chapter summary highlighting the key points made in the chapter.

# Activities

At the end of each chapter are suggestions for activities that students can do inside and outside the classroom. These include questions for small-group discussion; observational research and survey projects; interviews; self-reflection and self-assessment projects; and exercises to do with a loved one.



## Glossary

**A**

**ABC-X Family Crisis Model** A theoretical model of family crisis in which A denotes the stressor, B denotes the family's crisis-solving resources, C denotes the family's definition of the stressor, and X denotes the crisis.

**ability to manage stress and crisis effectively** One of the six major qualities commonly found in emotionally healthy families identified by researchers working within the family strengths framework.

**abortifacient** Anything used to induce abortion.

**abortion** Expulsion of a fetus from the uterus before it is sufficiently developed to survive on its own; commonly used to describe only artificially induced terminations of pregnancy.

**accommodating style** A style of conflict resolution characterized by nonassertive but cooperative behavior; accommodates subjugate their own wants and needs to those of others.

**acculturation** The intermingling of cultural traits and values with those of the dominant culture.

**acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS)** A fatal condition caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), which suppresses the immune system.

**HIV** is transmitted primarily through blood and semen.

**afterbirth** The placenta and fetal membranes, which are expelled from the uterus during the third stage of labor.

**ageism** A form of prejudice or discrimination in which one judges an older person negatively solely on the criterion of age.

**aggressive communication** A style of interpersonal communication that attempts to hurt or put down the receiver while protecting the aggressor's self-esteem.

**agreeing to disagree** A negotiating strategy in which two people are unable to agree on opposing courses of action and decide to take neither course of action.

**AIDS** See acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

**Al-Anon** A self-help group for families of alcoholics.

**Alateen** A support group for young people with alcoholic parents, based on the Alcoholics Anonymous model.

**alcohol abuse** A generic term that encompasses both alcoholism (addiction to alcohol characterized by compulsive drinking) and problem drinking (alcohol consumption that results in functional disability).

**Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)** A self-help group for alcoholics.

**alcoholism** Addiction to alcohol characterized by compulsive drinking.

**alimony** Court-ordered financial support to a spouse or former spouse following separation or divorce.

**ambiguous loss** When a family member is physically absent but psychologically present, the family experiences highly stressed feelings. People need to find ways to accept a loss before they can move on through the grieving process, but this is difficult when there is significant ambiguity in the situation. See also **boundary ambiguity**.

**amniotic sac** The membrane that encloses the fetus and holds the amniotic fluid, which insulates the fetus.

**androgen** Any of the hormones that develop and maintain male secondary sex characteristics.

**androgyny** A blending of traditionally masculine and traditionally feminine personality characteristics and role behaviors in one person; the absence of sex-typing with regard to roles.

**anorgasmia** A sexual dysfunction that prevents a woman from having an orgasm.

**anxiety disorder** A mental disorder characterized by attacks of panic that are not occasioned by life-threatening situations or extreme physical exertion.

**appreciation and affection** One of the six major qualities commonly found in emotionally healthy families identified by researchers working within the family strengths framework.

**arranged marriage** See parent arranged marriage.

**artificial insemination** The mechanical introduction of semen into the uterus in an attempt to cause pregnancy.

**assertive communication** A style of interpersonal communication that involves expressing one's self-interests and wishes without degrading or putting down the other person.

**assertiveness** A person's ability to express her or his feelings and desires.

**assimilation** Adopting the cultural traits and values of the dominant culture.

**attentive listening** A style of listening focused on fully understanding the speaker's point of view; characterized by encouragement rather than trying to direct or control the speaker.

**authoritarian parenting** A parenting style characterized by the demand for absolute obedience to rigid rules and the use of punitive, forceful disciplinary measures.

G-1

## Key Terms and Glossary

The key terms listed at the end of each chapter are defined in the glossary at the end of the book. By visiting the text's Web site, students can test their understanding of these terms by using the chapter-by-chapter flashcards and doing the crossword puzzles.

## Pregnancy and Childbirth

appendix D

### The Process of Reproduction

Conception  
Infertility  
"Am I Pregnant?"

### Pregnancy and Preparation for Birth

Education for Childbirth  
Nutrition and Exercise During Pregnancy  
Drug Use During Pregnancy  
Sex During Pregnancy

### Labor and Delivery

Three Stages of Labor  
Cesarean Section  
Alternative Approaches to Birth  
Physical and Psychological Changes After Birth

### Caring for an Infant

Bonding with the Baby  
Breast-Feeding


### Miscarriage, Stillbirth, and Infant Death

## Appendix on Pregnancy and Childbirth

This appendix, absent from the fourth edition, has been restored and revised. It provides information on the process of reproduction; pregnancy and preparation for birth; labor and delivery; caring for an infant; and miscarriage, stillbirth, and infant death.

A-25





# Marriages & Families

Intimacy, Diversity,  
and Strengths