



THE PSYCHOLOGY OF WOMEN

FOURTH EDITION

Margaret W. Matlin

MARGARET W. MATLIN
SUNY GENESEO

The
**PSYCHOLOGY
OF WOMEN**

FOURTH EDITION

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Berkshire House
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Latin America

Thomson Learning
Seneca, 53
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Spain

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This book is dedicated to
THE STUDENTS
IN MY PSYCHOLOGY OF WOMEN CLASSES

Preface

I prepared the Fourth Edition of *The Psychology of Women* in 1999, the last year of the 20th century. The current study of the psychology of women was born in the late 1960s, developed in its youth and adolescence during the 1970s and 1980s, and is thriving in its adulthood as we cross into the 21st century. Hundreds of professors throughout North America are currently teaching college courses about the psychology of women or the psychology of gender. Increasing numbers of students are selecting these courses because of their personal or academic interest in this endlessly fascinating subject. Research in the psychology of women continues to be energetic and diverse. Topics range from prenatal influences to adolescent friendship patterns, and to the life satisfaction of women of all ages.

When this textbook was first published in 1987, the research on many aspects of women's lives was scanty at best. Publications that were available did not always feature women's own perspectives. Little information about women of color could be found, and cross-cultural studies were virtually nonexistent. In contrast, it's now a unique challenge to keep up with the hundreds of books and thousands of articles published on this subject each year.

The Psychology of Women (Fourth Edition) provides a synthesis of information that can guide readers through important facets of women's lives. I have made a special effort to include significant topics that are omitted or abbreviated in most other textbooks: the development of gender-typing, women and work, love relationships, pregnancy and motherhood, women with disabilities, and later adulthood. The resources cited represent only a fraction of the literature I examined in preparing the sequence and coverage of the subjects. In the first edition of this textbook, I commented that the meager information on the psychology of women made writers reluctant to tackle a textbook in this area. The explosion of research in the past decade has made the task rewarding, but challenging from a different perspective. As this project progressed, I often asked myself, "How can I possibly cover all these dimensions of women's lives without creating a textbook of encyclopedic proportions?"

Text Features and Organization

The Fourth Edition of *The Psychology of Women* combines both developmental and topical approaches. An introductory chapter presents some general concepts and several important cautions about research methods and biases. The stereotypes that help shape gender-related expectations and behavior are then addressed. The next two chapters explore female development, from prenatal experiences and infancy, through childhood and adolescence.

The next nine topical chapters examine components of women's lives, such as gender comparisons, work experiences, love relationships, sexuality, childbirth, physical and psychological health, and violence against women. Young adults

are usually the focus of psychological research in these areas, although the implied scope is much broader. (For example, females of all ages may be affected by violence.) Chapter 14 focuses more specifically on women who are middle-aged and elderly. The concluding chapter assesses the current status of women, women's studies, and gender relations as we enter the 21st century.

Organization is an important component of both my teaching and my textbooks. For example, the combination of life-span and topical approaches seems to provide a cohesive framework that my own students appreciate. However, all chapters are self-contained; instructors who prefer a different approach can easily rearrange the sequence of topics. The subdivisions within each chapter have their own summaries, to allow further flexibility.

A second organizational feature is that the book develops four general themes about the psychology of women that can be traced through many components of women's lives. These themes provide a sense of continuity to an area that may otherwise seem overwhelming to students.

The special features that were praised in the first three editions of *The Psychology of Women* have been retained:

- Topical outlines give students an overall structure prior to reading each chapter.
- True–False questions at the beginning of each chapter encourage student interest and foreshadow the key issues to be examined.
- The writing style is clear and interesting; it continually engages the reader, and includes many examples and quotations reflecting women's experiences.
- Boldface type identifies new terms, which are defined within the same sentence. To accommodate professors who may assign chapters in a nonlinear order, a new term that is used in several chapters (e.g., social constructionism) is redefined each time it appears. In addition, the correct pronunciation is provided parenthetically for terms that have potentially ambiguous pronunciations.
- Small-scale demonstrations are included to encourage involvement and to clarify the procedures for key research studies.
- Section summaries (two to five in each chapter) allow frequent review prior to beginning new material.
- A “New Terms” section at the end of each chapter invites students to review the vocabulary.
- The end-of-chapter review questions encourage students to clarify and synthesize concepts; they also offer instructors a wide range of discussion topics or written assignments for students.
- The lists of recommended readings suggest extra resources for students who want to explore in greater detail the topics covered within each chapter. I have annotated each reference.

This book is intended for students from a variety of backgrounds. I have included extensive learning aids, to make it readable for students who have taken only an introductory course in psychology. However, because the coverage of

topics is complete and the references are extensive, *The Psychology of Women* should also be useful for advanced-level students. This textbook is primarily designed for courses in psychology of women, psychology of gender, psychology of gender comparisons, and psychology of gender roles. Some instructors focusing on the psychology of gender may wish to supplement the book with one of several textbooks currently available on the psychology of men.

Features of the Fourth Edition

This Fourth Edition continues the special features and writing style that students and professors admired in the earlier editions. Professors who reviewed the Third Edition were pleased with its overall structure; therefore, I retained the same topic sequence for the Fourth Edition. However, readers should note the following changes:

- Whenever possible, I have expanded coverage on women of color living in the United States and Canada.
- Cross-cultural perspectives have been enlarged whenever possible. Research on women living in other cultures has been more forthcoming, and this information provides a broader view of women's lives.
- "Women's voices" are more widely included. Direct quotations from girls and women balance the qualitative and quantitative approaches to research.
- Each chapter is introduced with a vignette or anecdote that represents a perspective on the chapter's content.
- This Fourth Edition is a thoroughly revised and updated textbook featuring more than 1,300 new references; 1,068 of the 2,133 references in the book were published in 1995 or later. It reflects changes in women's lives, changes in their views of themselves, and changes in society's attitudes toward women's issues.

New Coverage in Specific Chapters

For professors familiar with the previous edition, here is a concise guide to some representative changes in this new textbook:

- Chapter 1: Rearranged; expanded coverage of theoretical approaches.
- Chapter 2: Shortened; new section on heterosexism in relationship to sexism.
- Chapter 3: Reorganized; updated research on children's gender knowledge and stereotypes.
- Chapter 4: New research on the premenstrual syndrome, adolescent women and education, and early romantic relationships.
- Chapter 5: Reorganized; incorporates new research on gender comparisons in cognitive abilities.
- Chapter 6: Greater emphasis on cross-cultural issues in social and personality characteristics.

- Chapter 7: Reflects current multidisciplinary research on women and work; new sections on women and welfare and on combating discriminatory treatment.
- Chapter 8: Increased coverage of love relationships from cross-cultural and ethnically diverse perspectives; critiques of the biological perspective on sexual orientation.
- Chapter 9: A more woman-centered approach to sexuality; updated information and cross-cultural perspectives on birth control.
- Chapter 10: New quotations about pregnancy and motherhood; updated coverage of postpartum problems and infertility.
- Chapter 11: Reorganized; approximately 140 new references; up-to-date coverage of social class and susceptibility to disease, AIDS, and substance abuse.
- Chapter 12: New case studies of women and psychological disorders; updated discussion of eating disorders.
- Chapter 13: Explores entitlement in relation to violence against women; updated statistics on the incidence of sexual harassment, rape, and abuse.
- Chapter 14: Updates on the double standard of aging, retirement, and economic issues; alternative views of menopause.
- Chapter 15: Reorganized; expanded coverage of women of color, men's studies, and international issues.

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Lucinda DeWitt agreed to coauthor the Instructor's Manual/Test Bank for this Fourth Edition. Lucinda wrote the Test Item File for my introductory psychology textbook, and I was consistently impressed with her skill in writing clear and interesting multiple-choice items. Her expertise in the psychology of women, combined with her verbal skills and good judgment, greatly enhance the quality of the instructor's supplement.

I would also like to thank friends, relatives, and colleagues for suggesting many important references: Susan Arellano, Christine Beard, Lawrence Casler, Jacques Chevalier, Johanna Connelly, Amy Jo Eldred, Lisa Elliot, Hugh Foley, Joanne Goodrich (from the About Canada Project), Jennifer Gullo, Diane Halpern, Marion Hocter, Jamie Kerr, Arnold Matlin, Kathy McGowan, Stuart J. McKelvie, Patricia Murphy, Josephine Naidoo, Thaddeus Naprawa, George Rebok, Philip Smith, Helen S. White, and Diony Young.

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Claudia Liepold, Ron Pretzer, and Louis Wadsworth deserve special recognition for their creativity and persistence as photographers. Thanks also to Sandra Lord for her excellent work in obtaining additional photos.

The editorial staff at Harcourt College Publishers were exceptionally skilled in guiding this edition of *The Psychology of Women* through development and its production. Tracy Napper is a superb developmental editor. I greatly admire her organizational skills, her useful perspectives on important issues, and her helpfulness in pursuing elusive information. It was a pleasure to work with her. Lisa Hensley, associate editor, shared her expertise in editorial matters, as well as her perspectives on clinical psychology issues. Carol Wada, executive editor, helped us examine our goals for this new edition and provided useful insights at many points in the book's development.

Other people at Harcourt who deserve my thanks include Claudia Gravier, project editor, and Andrea Archer, production manager. I'd also like to acknowledge Carol Kincaid's good work on the textbook's design. I would also like to thank Kathleen Sharp, Harcourt's marketing strategist, for her energetic and thoughtful guidance during the later stages of production.

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Linda Webster prepared the indexes for this book. Linda and I have now worked together on eight textbooks, and I continue to admire her ability to produce such detailed and thoughtful resources.

Finally, I thank the three most important people in my life for their help, suggestions, love, and enthusiasm—my husband, Arnie, and our daughters, Beth and Sally. Their appreciation and pride in my work continue to make writing textbooks a joyous occupation.

MARGARET W. MATLIN
Geneseo, New York

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