

ILLUSION

AND

DISILLUSION

The Self in Love
and Marriage

FOURTH EDITION



John F. Crosby

Fourth Edition



*Illusion and
Disillusion
The Self in Love
and Marriage*

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to those who came before:
FULLING/CROSBY and WELLS/EASTWICK
and to those who came after:
RICK-ANDY-SCOTT
and way after:
VICKI

Foreword

by B. Kay Pasley, Ed.D.

Illusion and Disillusion: The Self in Love and Marriage represents one of a few books so well received that it merits yet a new fourth edition. Here readers are offered revised and new conceptualizations which add clarity to the complex nature of intimate relationships in a rapidly changing world. I am honored to write this foreword and do so with appreciation for what I believe is a volume which makes an important and unique contribution to the literature on marital relationships.

I have a long history with *Illusion* and its author. Early on I was a graduate student of Dr. Crosby while he was on the faculty at Indiana University. There we spent hours discussing and debating the ideas he chose to write about and include in the very first edition. At the same time, I was fortunate to be exposed to his superb skill as a teacher and observed him presenting many of the concepts presented here to undergraduate students. Even then I was impressed with his openness to those who ventured to challenge his beliefs and, in turn, have their own beliefs challenged. Too, his energy and passion for teaching were apparent in the classroom; this same energy and passion were evident throughout the pages of the first edition of *Illusion*.

As my own career in academia began and progressed, I had the opportunity to provide input into later editions, as I served as a reviewer for them. I provided criticism and feedback to his effort to refine his ideas and to identify and explain key issues and processes involved in fostering productive marital relationships. His eager response to feedback has continued and is a sign of his belief that learning is in fact an ongoing process. His desire to communicate complex theories and concepts clearly and dynamically is evident in this new edition as well. Thus, I am not an unbiased evaluator of Dr. Crosby's work. My involvement with *Illusion* over the years has resulted in a deep appreciation of this new edition and those which came before it, particularly when compared with the content of typical texts dealing with marriage.

Illusion most definitely is in a genre of its own. It is a unique book in that Crosby's commitment has always been to explain theories, concepts, and the

important and vital processes that help individuals understand their own contribution to relationship survival and the resulting joy which is possible. His experience as a therapist and his competence as a teacher are again evident here. Unlike many authors, Dr. Crosby places less emphasis on the facts and figures surrounding marriage or divorce. While such information is interesting, it is rarely applicable to one's own life. Yet, students often are held responsible for such information; they memorize the facts, regurgitate them on tests, and promptly forget them. The ideas presented in *Illusion* are grounded in what is known both empirically and clinically, yet they are less forgettable. Here we are consistently offered explanations of theory, concepts, and processes which synthesize succinctly what's of real importance to marriage. Students who demonstrate true understanding of the theories, concepts, and processes offered here have meaningful information for use in their personal lives. This is the true value of *Illusion*; *Illusion* provides insight to building and maintaining intimate relationships over time based on what is known from both empirical and clinical sources.

This new edition has maintained some of the "meat" from earlier editions which is timeless and useful now some 17 + years later. For me this suggests that Crosby was and is able to capture ideas which are key to relationships. I particularly appreciate his clear identification and explanation of the "roots of disillusionment" as he calls it. Too, his distinguishing between happiness/unhappiness as a personal trait and joy/sorrow as a relationship trait continues to have meaning for our understanding of self as the basis for developing productive and healthy relationships. His discussion of legitimate and illegitimate needs still offers readers a workable paradigm for understanding their conscious or unconscious motivations for certain patterns of interaction.

Yet, this edition also provides new insight into marriage and marriage-like relationships. Here Dr. Crosby emphasizes the influence of one's family of origin on later behavior patterns. His Appendix A, for example, makes a strong contribution to understanding that marriage includes all of one's past, including the role models presented by a parent or parents, interaction with siblings and friends, and for some even the first marriage experience. This is the baggage one brings to any marriage. Also, the new chapter dealing with divorce and remarriage is a valuable addition. With inclusion of this topic, however, Crosby does not bemoan the failure of marriage, but acknowledges the realities of today's marital institution. He continues to articulate the ways relationships are crippled by expectations which served us well historically but which unfairly inhibit the creativity necessary to enhance relationships and make them personally meaningful over time. What Crosby offers here is a look at divorce and remarriage from the standpoint of one who values reinvestment in a current relationship rather than the capricious termination of a marriage because of one's inability to anticipate how a relationship might change to better meet the changing needs of the individuals.

What continues to be unique to *Illusion* is its focus on self as the basis and foundation for caring relationships within marriage. Other books typically focus on simply the relationship or some unique aspects of it such as sex-role issues. Crosby again has the courage to explore the individual within the relationship. He has the foresight to identify the self as the foundation and integrative thread for relationships. As a dear friend, Dr. Kathryn Hatch, once said, "Perception is everything; reality is nothing." Her comment suggests that it is the individual's perception of himself/herself and experience that becomes his/her reality. It may or may not have much to do with the perceptions of the spouse regarding the same situation, but nonetheless this perception or the lack of a shared perception certainly can raise havoc in the relationship. In *Illusion* Crosby explores an individual's perception, its source, and the interpretations one makes about such perceptions to help the reader understand that relationships do not occur in a vacuum but are part of a dynamic, ever-changing process.

Perhaps that is what *Illusion* offers best: a focus on the processes which can enhance an individual's response to his or her own change, as well as to change which may occur within the relationship. For it is to change that we, if we elect to be part of intimate relationships over time, must adapt. Crosby does not ask us to give up our dreams regarding marriage; he only cautions us to understand their source so we can adjust them to fit our experiences. He asks us to know and understand the self as the basis for developing healthful and meaningful relationships. He does not suggest the path to intimacy is easy, nor that it is arduous, but that what it does require is self-knowledge, constant attention, and energy and commitment to the welfare of both the self and the other.

In these pages are gifts that represent forethought and concern for the well-being of spouses and the marriages they create. Crosby suggests that each individual shares in the responsibility for nurturing the relationship. It is this sharing that is our hope for defining and building marriages which can grow and change with the growth and change of the individual. Only in this way can the needs of both the individual and the relationship be met.

B. Kay Pasley
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Colorado State University

Preface

*Those who love the truth
Must seek love in marriage,
Love without illusions.*

Albert Camus, *A Writer's Notebook*

I began writing *Illusion and Disillusion* in 1970, and now, two decades later, I am still writing it and rewriting it. In this sense this fourth edition is like a fourth marriage to the same partner. I keep redefining it, reinventing it, and re-creating it! It is never finished. I keep growing. I keep changing. Life keeps changing.

Readers may disagree with many of my ideas; to this I can only reply that if the disagreement is based on sound insight and widely observed phenomena rather than on the strength of custom, tradition, and romanticized folklore, I welcome it! I wish to challenge the reader to think of marriage as an opportunity for the enrichment of life, as a relationship between two self-aware people open to change and growth and thus not bound to traditional societal role definitions and expectations. With Sidney Jourard I believe marriage is for LIFE, not for DEATH.

If these pages serve to raise the reader's anxiety level and make him or her feel uncomfortable, then I am glad, because I fail to see how any change will take place in our marital system until people begin to question seriously the premises and assumptions underlying it. When serious challenges are made on our traditional belief system there is bound to be some degree of internal agony and pain, restlessness and uncertainty, doubt and insecurity.

I hope that what I have to say will speak equally to the single, the married, the divorced, and the remarried in more than an academic or intellectual way! My goal is to avoid platitudinous advice while yet pointing to significant research findings, experiential truth, and clinical insights. At heart, *Illusion and Disillusion* is a study of self and marriage set within a family systems framework. My viewpoint is based on the premise that individual dynamics

cannot be understood apart from the lifelong interactions both within one's family of origin and within one's present relationships. Buttressing and supplementing the systemic superstructure are the frameworks of object relations, exchange, resource, and symbolic interaction. I believe each of these frameworks plays a part in our understanding of the issues, problems, and challenges of marriage.

Throughout these pages is an implicit emphasis on both mate selection and the growth of the self. Some people hold that the chief problem with marriage is the choice of mate! If only we had chosen our mate with more care we would not be feeling such frustration or misery! Often the self deludes itself into thinking that the problem of marriage is entirely in the choice of the right mate. This is but another way of saying that the problem is always and entirely with one's mate rather than with oneself. This is denial! This is stupid! Hundreds of thousands of divorced persons simply end one marriage only to take their same unchanged self and self-dynamics, replete with their sexual prejudices and stereotypes, into another marriage.

Although there may be many things wrong with the institution of marriage and also with one's mate, the primary theme is *the self in love and marriage*. The self is a system in its own right. It is also a subsystem within marriage and within the family. As such, we can never separate the self from the immediate environment and the immediate intimate relationship. We are what we are not only in relationship to ourselves but also in relationship to our mate and a widening circle of others who are most significant and important to us. Further, even though we may no longer live in the domicile of our family of origin, we are certainly the products of it. We deceive ourselves if we think that the dynamics of our family of origin do not continue to play through us in our dyadic relationships as well as in our future parental relations with our offspring.

The reader will note, however, that *Illusion and Disillusion* does not deal with *macro* issues such as changing work patterns, dual-employment pressures, technology, the economy, inflation, the cost of housing, environmental pollution, international relations, the greenhouse effect, or the future of our children and grandchildren on planet earth. Although each of these has a profound direct or indirect effect on every individual, on every marriage, and on every family, I have chosen to concentrate almost exclusively on the intraself and the intra-family *micro* dynamics. I have done this in the interest of keeping this book singular in scope and as short and concise as possible. The intramarital and the intrafamilial patterns and forces are a part of our intimate environment, and as such we can exert immediate, direct, and ongoing pressure for change and redesign, redefinition, and re-creation.

I continue to be deeply appreciative to a host of people for their seen and unseen contributions to this latest edition of *'Lusion*, as I have come to call it.

The most unseen is Marjorie, my wife, who continues to be my best friend, second only to myself. When I wrote the first edition, Steve Rutter was a sales representative for Wadsworth Publishing Company. Now Steve is Editor-in-Chief, and I still appreciate his attention to the folks in the rank and file. I want to express my sincere thanks to Serina Beauparlant, Sociology Editor at Wadsworth, and to her assistant, Marla Nowick, for their support and assistance. I am indebted to the reviewers, James J. Berry, Western State College; Martha Bristor, Michigan State University; Richard Campbell, California State University, Northridge; and Scott Fuller, Santa Rosa Junior College. I remain indebted to Kay Pasley, who wrote the Foreword for this fourth edition. As the line from *The King and I* says, "When you become a teacher by your pupils you'll be taught." Kay was one of my first students, and now she is also my teacher and my friendly critic. I would also like to express my thanks to Ms. Mary Ortwein, who served as my permissions editor, and to Melissa Andrews, copy editor.

Last, but by no means least, I would like to thank my students and my clients without whom I would be nothing more than a desk-chair quarterback, devoid of the experience of the firing line and the trenches. I wish to thank those who wrote personal statements and all those others whose personal struggles formed the content of the "fabricated" case studies. Of course, I take total responsibility for the content of the book and for the interpretations I have placed on the thought of others.

John F. Crosby
University of Kentucky

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Ways of looking at Suzanne and Scott

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*The fourth root of disillusionment:
personal development*

Suzanne and Scott . . . again!

Summary

Reading suggestions
