
Book Reviews / Comptes rendus

Ricketts, W. & Gochros, H. L. (Eds.) (1987). *Intimate relationships: Some social work perspectives on love*. New York: The Haworth Press.

Reviewed by: M. Honoré France, University of Victoria

“What’s love got to do with it?” is how the editors of this resourceful collection of papers begin. The eleven chapters are papers formally published in the *Journal of Social Work & Human Sexuality*, Volume 5(2) that attempt to address a number of issues concerning intimate relationships. These issues include the gender differences in love and intimacy; sexual radicalism and romantic love; exploration of brief intimate encounters; barriers in the initiation of intimate heterosexual relationships; shyness as an inhibitor to development of intimacy; mediating the end of love. Issues which concern specific groups of people are also included. Some of these involve problems and opportunities which arise when women treat women; the adolescent quest for intimacy; male couples, lesbians choosing children; and the love and intimacy needs of the elderly. Although this book is for social workers, there is a direct application to counsellors working with a variety of age groups.

Ricketts and Gochros selected the chapters for this volume because they perceive that helpers have been primarily listening to “male academic voices, who are stressing objectivity, effectiveness, and quantitative research as opposed to its more female practice voices which put more emphasis on emotion, nurturance and warmth” (p. 3). This reflects the more dimensional view of love that is in the chapters.

The views of the contributors reflect the following themes: all love relationships, regardless of age or sexual orientation, have certain characteristics; love must be learned; there are social skills needed to initiate and carry on intimate relationships. Besides offering views on love and intimacy, this book offers a number of interventions that helpers can use. In the chapter on gender differences, the prescription for developing intimacy is to encourage people to accept themselves as they are, to recognize their intimacies for what they are and let them be, to encourage self expression, and to teach people to deal with their intimate reactions. In other words, rather than trying to meet others’ expectations of sexual roles, the authors encourage self-acceptance and the acceptance of loved ones’ individuality through listening and commitment to the continual development of the relationship.

Some of the strategies offered are innovative and unique, while others sound more like the things that popular magazines suggest. For example, some of the strategies offered for assisting people to overcome barriers in developing intimate relationships involve altering hair style, make-up,

clothes, and body shape through exercise and weight control. Changing self handicapping behaviours like "negative self-talk" to "positives" are hardly new ideas.

On the other hand, there are some ideas that are quite novel. For example, people are advised to "practice cross-gender role behaviours by talking to, observing, and modeling the role behaviours of opposite-sex friends and siblings or of more androgynous same sex friends and siblings" (p. 107). I find it interesting and refreshing that those who are more androgynous are more likely to develop intimate relations than those who are traditional.

In summary, this book brings together a nice cross-section of useful ideas and strategies for a variety of groups. While some of the strategies are less applicable than others, overall, they are presented in a readable and concrete manner. The research and practice cited are up-to-date and summarize for the counsellor all relevant information for those working with love and relationship issues. One final thought reflecting the general emphasis of this book, is that the authors stress intimacy in relationships rather than love. They assume, probably correctly, that intimacy is more of a goal than love and that intimacy is necessary first for love to come about.

Kendrick, M. (1988). *Anatomy of a nightmare. The failure of society in dealing with child sexual abuse*. Toronto, Ontario: Macmillan of Canada.

Reviewed by: Gary H. Jeffery, Memorial University

This very powerful, though at times slightly repetitious, book makes a very strong case for the use of caution and reason when considering accusations of child sexual abuse. Kendrick, a journalist with an anthropology background, sets out to warn the reader against believing too quickly that all who are accused of molesting children are guilty. He makes his point by outlining several key Canadian and U.S. child sexual abuse court cases and the events that preceded them. His repeatedly made point is that in our zeal to ferret out real sexual abusers we (as mental health professionals, prosecutors, medical practitioners and educators) have too often seriously abused the rights of totally innocent people. We are accused of using tactics similar to those used in witch hunts of old. Ill-founded accusations have destroyed the lives of innocent people. Many families (and especially the children in them) have been put at risk.

The book does not downplay the horror of child exploitation. Similarly it does not encourage us to ease our efforts to eliminate this long-