



Sex and Love in Intimate Relationships

Robert W. Firestone, Lisa A. Firestone, Joyce Catlett


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Sexuality can be one of the most fulfilling pleasures in life. Yet it is an aspect of relationships that is complex and sometimes fraught with difficulty. Given the mixed messages about sexuality that exist in our culture, it is hardly surprising that men and women find intimate relationships hard to discuss and negotiate. Furthermore, therapy for sexual dysfunction has tended to emphasize physiological and technical issues over the psychological ones that the authors believe are at the root of many couples' problems. In "Sex and Love in Intimate Relationships", Firestone and his coauthors help therapists help their clients. Drawing on their forty years of combined clinical experience and a unique longitudinal study of couples and families, they propose that sexual problems are largely related to defenses acquired through painful childhood experiences. The self-sabotaging effects of this 'fantasy bond' - an illusion of connection to the mother or primary caregiver - give rise to critical internal 'voices'. These voices support negative views of the self and others, interfering with closeness and intimacy. In accessible language and through the liberal use of case material from therapy sessions, the authors show how clients can be helped to overcome these challenges and become physically and emotionally closer to their partners. "Sex and Love in Intimate Relationships" is thought-provoking reading for anyone interested in what sustains a loving and fulfilling sexual relationship.

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