Minding the Close Relationship

In this informative volume, social psychologists John H. Harvey and Julia Omarzu describe a new concept called “minding,” which demonstrates principles by which couples can achieve and maintain long-term closeness and satisfaction. Minding the Close Relationship brings together the latest scholarship on relationships, with practical advice, and it compares the theory of minding with several other theories about maintaining closeness. The activity of minding yields a cooperative, consensual approach that cannot be achieved by either partner’s individual acts and, once achieved, makes partners feel validated and special in their relationships.

Minding the Close Relationship will serve as a supplementary textbook for undergraduate and graduate courses in social psychology, communication, family studies, and clinical and counseling psychology.

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Minding the Close Relationship

A THEORY OF RELATIONSHIP ENHANCEMENT

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This book is dedicated to Pamela and Michael, who have been indispensable to our understanding of closeness and minding
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Preface and Acknowledgments

We wrote this book to describe a new approach to close relationship maintenance. As described in Chapter 1, minding refers to a process that we believe is essential if a committed couple is to feel the special joy and satisfaction that may be associated with long-term closeness.

The history of this book is traced in Chapter 1. As we note there, the book began to be developed about four years ago from early musings by the first author on how little is known about the maintenance of close relationships. We know a lot about how people start and end relationships, but much less about how they make their relationships work over time. As described in Chapter 1, we were fortunate to begin our association in 1995 and began to consider the minding idea as a new approach to factors that may contribute significantly to relationship enhancement.

Part of this book overlaps with our earlier 1997 article that first articulated our theory of minding. We are indebted to Norbert Kerr, Associate Editor of the Personality and Social Psychology Review, who handled the review of our article, and to the anonymous reviewers who challenged us to make the argument more coherent and better fitted to many more works in the extensive close relationships literature than we had initially conceived to be relevant to minding. While these reviewers did not agree with our conception, they along with a long list of commentators who are accomplished relationship scholars literally helped us build the theory and its many implications that are presented here. These scholars include: Carolyn Ellis, Susan Hendrick, Constance Jones, Susan Lutgendorf, Terri Orbuch,
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