

THE NEW PSYCHOLOGY OF LOVE

Second Edition

This is a much-needed development from the first edition that provides an update on the theory and research on love by world-renowned scientific experts. It explores love from a diverse range of standpoints: social-psychological, evolutionary, neuropsychological, clinical, cultural, and even political. It considers questions such as: How do men and women differ in their love? What makes us susceptible to jealousy and envy in relationships? How does love differ across cultures?

As the psychological basis of love is examined, this volume showcases what attracts people to one another, why love has developed the way it has over time and what evolutionary purpose it serves. It also analyses why and when love relationships both succeed and fail, which means readers will be rewarded with a better understanding of their own relationships and those of others, as well as what can be done to build a lasting, loving relationship.

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Edited by Robert J. Sternberg , Karin Sternberg
Frontmatter
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*This book is dedicated to Ellen Berscheid, whose
pioneering work in collaboration with Elaine Hatfield
created the scientific study of love.*

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Preface

In 1975, Senator William Proxmire presented his Golden Fleece Award for waste in government spending to Ellen Berscheid (to whom this book is dedicated) and Elaine Hatfield (a contributor to this book). The target of his ire was work they were doing through a grant from the National Science Foundation on the scientific analysis of love.

Today, the scientific analysis of love is part and parcel of the field of psychological science. It has its own journals largely devoted to it, such as the *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* and *Personal Relationships*, and has been the topic of numerous books, including a number by the contributors in this volume. One of the principal books in the field has been an earlier edition of this work, *The New Psychology of Love*, published in 2006.

It is more than a decade since the original edition of this book was published, and during that time theory and research in the field of love have exploded. The field as it was is barely recognizable. This is illustrated by the fact that more than half of the authors contributing to this book are new. Not only did they not contribute to the earlier volume, but at the time the earlier volume was published, some were still in secondary school, college, or graduate school! Some of the contributors in the earlier edition are no longer active researchers, either having passed on to other phases of their lives, or having passed away. The editors' recognition of how explosively much of the field has changed and expanded is what led to this new volume (with a new publisher, Cambridge University Press). We have asked the researchers we consider to be the most influential in the field to contribute, and we are delighted that they agreed to be part of this book.

There are many ways in which the field has changed as a whole since the early days of the study of love. First, it used to be fairly easy to characterize an essay on love as taking some kind of disciplinary approach: clinical, social, personality, biological, and so on. Today, that would be hard to

do. Many investigators use a variety of approaches, so that the approaches blur together much more. Second, many of the early theories, whether they were psychoanalytical or not, directly showed the influence of Freud and his disciples. Today, one would struggle to find such influence. Third, contemporary research is much more rigorous scientifically than it was in the past. So the field you read about today will be very different from the field as it once was.

This book is intended to be readable for any educated person with an interest in love. Because almost everyone has some interest in love, if you are reading this Preface, then this book is written for you!

We hope you enjoy the book. We believe it represents some of the best scientific work currently being done in the field of love, and it will present to you many different perspectives, so you will be able to choose the perspective you prefer, or perhaps even combine perspectives to come up with your own.