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addresses ways in which therapists contribute to men’s resistance to seek therapy.

The book proceeds to address ways in which successful therapy with traditional men might be conducted. The author nicely integrates his own personal practice, including his successes and failures with specific and clear techniques. Postmodern in nature, the author clearly bases his suggestions within a gender- and culturally sensitive perspective. That is, it is suggested that techniques and interventions be used only as they appropriately match the client’s dominant value system, social context, and gendered culture. Above all, the therapist must actively listen, express genuine curiosity, seek to learn from the client’s unique perspective, and respect each client’s freedom to define a preferred gender role.

In addition to the provision of general therapeutic techniques, group and marriage and family interventions are also outlined. The author provides illustrations of how therapists can work with traditional men’s groups to encourage participants to unlearn some of the more unproductive lessons about manhood and relearn behaviors that are more positive. The author clearly underscores the importance of empowering all members of the client family or coupleship to challenge together the dysfunctional definitions of traditional masculinity. The author also provides a guiding baseline for counselors to act as encouragers or cocreators of environments that are free from gender role strain while conducive to gender equity and opportunities for both men and women within the marriage and family.

Finally, therapist gender and gender paradigms are addressed. Again the author suggests that each therapist should work from a culturally sensitive perspective, namely, one that allows the therapist to recognize his or her limitations while also communicating a sincere desire to help in spite of these limitations. In conclusion, differences in certain gender paradigms are discussed along with ways in which counselors can work to advocate for new models of masculinity, specifically those that allow both men and women opportunities to adapt to this ever-demanding and rapidly changing culture.

Rob Palkovitz wrote a unique book on fathering. In an age in which fathers are often maligned and given very little respect, Palkovitz conducted a qualitative study on how fathering affects the adult development of men by interviewing 40 fathers who were actively engaged in their fathering role. The author recognized the many limitations of doing this type of research and acknowledged that the findings may not apply to men in general. Why then should one take the time to read about the musings of 40 men on their role as a father? The men did not relate definitive answers on what made a good father. In fact, one is struck by the variety of responses given about various issues. Whereas each man was engaged in his fathering role, life circumstances played a role in choices made as a father. As a father of two grown daughters, I found the varied responses thought provoking and stimulating. I identified with the struggles of some of the fathers as they discussed choices and changes they made because of the fathering role. The interconnectedness of one’s life experiences, faith, and roles as father, worker, husband, and friend creates a tangled web of decisions that men make as they attempt to find balance in their life.

Palkovitz divides his book into five sections, each containing from one to four chapters. In the first section, he discusses theories of adult development and provides a literature review of the small body of writings on the topic. To date, very little has been done to study the various aspects of how fathering affects adult development. He then discusses his research plan and how the material is presented in the book, preparing the reader for a very organized presentation of the contents of the structured interviews. An interesting chapter in this section is a short history of fathering, detailing how the role has changed with social, economical, cultural, and technological differences over the past 300 years. The chapter ends with the responses from several men in the study discussing the role of fatherhood in general.

The second section discusses the self-domain, addressing the issues of emotional currents, faith, morality, values, and perceived changes in health. Each of these chapters (and most of the remaining chapters) begins with a list of the structured questions asked the subjects about the topics covered in the chapter. Then the author presents the data by providing numerous verbatim responses from the men. Palkovitz weaves the varied comments into a fascinating tapestry illustrating commonalities and differences. Some fathers saw significant changes occur within themselves when a child was born. Prior to the birth, they were more self-centered and free to do what they wanted. Having a child provided greater responsibility and a need to look beyond self to make plans for the family. About half became more religious and concerned about moral issues, whereas others did not see a need to develop this area any more than they had. Most of the men said that their values had changed significantly after becoming a father. Having children changes one’s outlook on longevity and basic health. The men reported smoking and drinking less, giving up illicit drugs, dietary changes, and exercising less.

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The third section covers the social domain. Within this three-chapter section, Palkovitz reports on the responses to questions about how fathering affects intimate relationships, relationships with other relatives, and friendships and community involvement. The men reported both positive and negative changes in the marital relationship. They reported being more committed to the marriage after a child was born. Having children increased conflicts with the spouse and had a negative influence on the couple’s sexual relationship. Men reported being closer to relatives and finding a greater appreciation for their own parents and siblings. However, some did report becoming more critical of their own fathers when they did not think their fathers had done a good job of fathering. The men reported their friendships usually became more focused on the activities of their children than on their own interests. Consequently, friendships often did not last past the conclusion of the children’s activities. Community activities increased as fathers took an interest in improving the quality of the neighborhood.

The work domain is covered in the one-chapter fourth section. Involved fathers struggle to balance work requirements and fathering, shifting priorities to try to maintain an equilibrium. Whereas some spoke of doing more to advance at work to be a better provider, others talked about competing work and family needs. Being a good provider and a good father was a concern and was not a task easily accomplished. This chapter concludes with a discussion of some of the myths about men. Palkovitz finds they are not as involved in parenting as they would like to be and do not use work as an excuse to cop out of being more family oriented. Although some policy changes have helped both men and women fulfill parenting roles, policy changes alone will not solve the problems parents face in the struggle to be involved with their children.

Palkovitz concludes the book with a summary, a cost analysis of being an involved father, and a discussion of the complexities of trying to balance all role relationships and other adult developmental issues with involved parenting. Many benefits and costs of involved fathering are listed. Different individuals weigh those benefits and costs in variant ways as they attempt to maintain a desired personal balance for their lives.

Involved Fathering and Men’s Adult Development deserves to be required reading for developmental and family studies courses. Marriage and family therapy classes would find the book useful in gaining an understanding of the complexities of the roles men have and the choices they make. Men in counseling could benefit from reading the book to see that they are not alone in their struggle to place fathering, the family, work, friends, and community in balance within their lives. I highly recommend this book to all. It is easy to read and very thought provoking.

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