



Dual-career Marriage: A System in Transition

Lisa R. Silberstein

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Dual-career marriage, in which wife and husband each pursue a professional career, offers a window into the changing landscape of gender roles and relations. In the span of a single generation, the family in which both parents work outside the home has gone from being the exception to being the rule. This book examines the multi-layered implications this impressive, rapid change holds for the fabric of family and marital life and for the course of men's and women's work lives.

Intensive interviews with dual-career wives and husbands provide rich information about four major issues:

- * In what ways and for whom do dual-career marriages replicate the traditional gender arrangements of one-career marriages, and in what ways do dual-career marriages represent a revolution in gender roles?
- * How do the two careers of spouses develop side by side, and in what ways do dual-career spouses help or hinder each other's careers?
- * How do work and family combine in dual-career marriages?
- * How are relationships between spouses and between parents and children affected by dual careers?

This book presents a subtle, textured portrait of contemporary dual-career marriage -- examining the complicated interplay of expectations, behaviors, and emotions within and between dual-career spouses. The author observes that the centrality of family or work to each spouse's sense of self powerfully affects how the couple negotiates the challenges posed by dual-career marriage, including feelings of competition between spouses, questions of geographic moves, and division of domestic tasks. The study illuminates many issues of clinical relevance, such as the common hazard of dual-career spouses having little time for marital intimacy once the rigorous demands of careers and children are met, and the complicated intrapersonal as well as interpersonal tensions generated by gender roles in transition.

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