

Book Review of The Good Marriage

By Wallerstein, J. S. & Blakeslee, S. 1995, Houghton Mifflin:NY.

In 1995, Judith S. Wallerstein, Ph.D. a renowned therapist and family researcher published her book, The Good Marriage. It is reviewed here because it represents one of the few attempts social scientists have made to focus research on the things that make marriage work. Strong marriage literature represents one of the most neglected family research areas. This review summarizes the main points. Many who read this review have also wanted to read the entire book. It contains a rich condensation of numerous research principles and therapeutic intervention strategies. We recommend it to you.

Scope of Book:

Wallerstein attempts to begin to fill the current void in the literature on Strong Marriages. Her book is intended to raise levels of awareness on the need for more research, to stimulate new research ideas, and to present qualitative research findings from her study. Wallerstein incorporates years of therapy experience with a command of the current literature on marriage and family experience. As the subtitle suggests, she is concerned with how and why love lasts. She selected 50 couples for her study. All were considered to have a happy marriage, had at least 1 child, and had been married at least 9 years. Throughout the book she uses interview data to illustrate critical points and to provide an insider's view into these successful marriages. The chapters are comprised of a discussion of 4 types of successful marriages and 9 tasks which couples must perform to establish a strong and happy relationship. These are presented below:

Four types of strong marriages

Romantic=It has at its core a lasting, passionately sexual relationship. They often share a sense that they were destined to be together. Exciting, sensual memories of their first meeting and courtship retain a glow over the years and are a continuing part of the bond between them.

Rescue=Although every good marriage provides comfort and healing for past unhappiness, in a successful rescue marriage the partners' early experiences have been traumatic. They are the walking wounded as they begin their lives together. The healing that takes place during the course of the marriage is the central theme.

Companionate=The most common type marriage among younger couples. It also reflects numerous social changes over the last 30 years. At its core is friendship, equality, and the value system of the women's movement, with its corollary that the male role, too,