



The Way We Really Are: Coming To Terms With America's Changing Families

Stephanie Coontz

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Stephanie Coontz, the author of *The Way We Never Were*, now turns her attention to the mythology that surrounds today's family—the demonizing of “untraditional” family forms and marriage and parenting issues. She argues that while it's not crazy to miss the more hopeful economic trends of the 1950s and 1960s, few would want to go back to the gender roles and race relations of those years. Mothers are going to remain in the workforce, family diversity is here to stay, and the nuclear family can no longer handle all the responsibilities of elder care and childrearing. Coontz gives a balanced account of how these changes affect families, both positively and negatively, but she rejects the notion that the new diversity is a sentence of doom. Every family has distinctive resources and special vulnerabilities, and there are ways to help each one build on its strengths and minimize its weaknesses. The book provides a meticulously researched, balanced account showing why a historically informed perspective on family life can be as much help to people in sorting through family issues as going into therapy—and much more help than listening to today's political debates.

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