

GAINING EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Nurturing Emotional Literacy

PETER SHARP

LONDON: DAVID FULTON; 2001;

Pb £16.00 (ISBN 1 853 46678 6)

REVIEWED BY Fiona Wilks-Riley

DID you know that it is EQ (emotional quotient) and not IQ (intelligence quotient) that predicts business performance? Now I know why I have been meaning to read something about emotional intelligence for so long. This is one of those books with quirky quotes, good wide margins, and exercises to fill in throughout. With a concise chapter size it is very organised and an easy read.

Emotional literacy is defined as the ability to recognise, understand, handle and appropriately express emotions. However, the components of emotional literacy were described rather too briefly in only a couple of paragraphs each, and the actual nurturing of emotional development, which I had hoped would be the main body of the book, was covered in only nine pages. I hoped that there would be more emphasis on this, and on helping those who are emotionally damaged. But the author is an educational psychologist and it is clear that this book was really written primarily with teachers in mind. Anyway, it was still a useful introduction to the field, and for the first time I was inspired to think how interesting it would be to be a teacher.

I have always said that it is more important to gain emotional development from school, instead of knowing what the capital of France is. This book seems at last to really emphasise this neglected aspect.

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Beating the bullies

Building a Culture of Respect: Managing Bullying at Work

NOREEN TEHRANI (ED)

LONDON: TAYLOR & FRANCIS; 2001; Pb £19.99 (ISBN 0 415 24648 2);

Hb (ISBN 0 415 24647 4)

REVIEWED BY Jane L. Ireland

THE main strength of this book lies in the range of topics that it includes. There was, however, a good deal of repetition between chapters and a tendency for some authors to rely too heavily on case-study material. Having said that, a number of the chapters were particularly useful and the strongest, in my opinion, were Helge Hoel and Cary Cooper's chapter on the origins of bullying and Claire Lawrence's on the social psychology of bullying.

Although Tehrani includes a number of contributions relating to the management of bullying, I was disappointed to see a reliance on reactive approaches – that is, what should happen following an incident

of bullying. No real mention was made of preventive approaches, aside from trying to change the organisational culture. This appears to be a substantial omission from a book with a subtitle of *Managing Bullying at Work*.

For those interested in furthering their understanding of workplace bullying, however, the book should prove a good resource. Those after a more academic and in-depth discussion of organisational bullying may find themselves disappointed.

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What can be done

Why Therapy Doesn't Work and What We Should Do About It

DAVID SMAIL

LONDON: CONSTABLE ROBINSON; 2001; Pb £10.99 (ISBN 1 841 19349 6)

REVIEWED BY Jay Watts

THIS volume contains two of David Smail's works: *Illusion and Reality*, which argues that anxiety is a natural response to seeing through the comfort of illusions; and *Taking Care*, which suggests avoiding therapy and instead learning how to nurture other people.

The author argues that psychological distress arises from the social context, rather than from illness or personal failure. He contends that the dominating values of society can have distressing effects on individuals and that therapists can have little success in treating such problems –

therapy cannot 'work' as a cure but may be beneficial as a personal relationship between individuals.

This book provokes reflection on what we can hope (and expect) to achieve in therapy, and how to balance belief in the social manifestation of distress with the mechanistic assumptions prevalent in our culture. It is also an invigorating read, and the questions raised will haunt me for a long time!

■ *Jay Watts is a research assistant at Barts and the London School of Medicine.*

Changing ideas about sexuality

Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Identities and Youth: Psychological Perspectives

ANTHONY D'AUGELLI & CHARLOTTE J. PATTERSON (Eds)

NEW YORK: OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS; 2001; Hb £49.50 (ISBN 0 19 511952 5); Pb £29.50 (ISBN 0 19 511953 3)

REVIEWED BY Lynne Hillier

THIS book is an edited collection of 12 review papers about research into, and theories of, adolescent sexualities. The chapters are clustered into three sections: 'Conceptual frameworks', 'Psychological challenges' and 'Intervention and social change'.

'Conceptual frameworks' provides research evidence about the psychosocial nature of adolescent sexuality, biological causes and a theory about difference and attraction. This section is invaluable in that it reviews the current research territory (in psychology) and includes extensive references. However, we have an overview of research that is limited in that it is mostly quantitative (except for chapter 3) and produces many ambiguous associations and differences (e.g. gay men weigh less and lesbians are taller than their heterosexual counterparts).

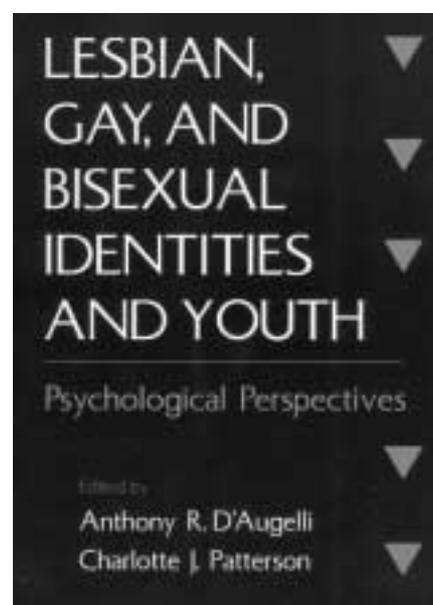
This section is essentialist with a focus on aetiology; but do we ask about the causes of heterosexuality? Moreover, the theoretical frameworks are heavily informed by the heterosexual model. This model dictates that people can only be attracted to each other if there is an oppositional masculine/feminine dynamic in which gender difference is the basis of sexual desire. It reminds one of old 'butch/femme' stereotypes based on the heterosexual model. While it is important to know the current state of the literature, these conceptual frameworks are problematic and highlight the need to include qualitative data collection. The field would also improve by moving the focus of research questions to, for example, why we feel the need to know what causes homosexuality.

The second section, 'Psychological challenges', deals with lesbians 'coming out', developmental trajectories and intimacy and ethnicity in same-sex-attracted youth. The chapter on lesbians by Margaret Schneider is particularly important because it pays attention to the invisibility of young lesbians and the dearth of research about them. This chapter gives a comprehensive account of the

research that exists, and acknowledges that young lesbians face very different challenges from those of young gay men.

Finally, 'Issues for intervention and social change' pays attention to the often hostile environments that gay lesbian and bisexual young people endure and looks at ways of intervening to address their issues. It includes chapters on university and school environments, counselling, educational reform and social change. This section is useful in providing information about what can be, and has been, done to address the needs of this group.

This is an ambitious book that covers a lot of territory from the extreme end of the biological to the politico-social. As a result, the chapters do not sit together easily. However, this matters little. This is a valuable collection of reviews that provides a feel for the research territory and an excellent starting point for further research. In some ways it is also a



document that reflects a social history of, and changing ideas about, this marginalised group. It is a must for those working in this important area of research.

■ *Dr Lynne Hillier is a research fellow at the Australian Research Centre in Sex Health and Society, La Trobe University, Melbourne.*

A newer synthesis

The Triumph of Sociobiology

JOHN ALCOCK

OXFORD: OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS; 2001; Hb £16.95 (ISBN 0 19 514383 3)

REVIEWED BY Nick Neave

IT is now a quarter of a century since the publication of E.O. Wilson's classic text *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis*, and since that time sociobiology and its offspring evolutionary psychology have been lauded and vilified in equal measure. Those opposed to evolutionary/biological approaches to the study of human behaviour have often voiced worthwhile and valuable criticisms, but are also guilty of wilful bias and misconception (see the curate's egg of a book *Alas Poor Darwin*).

In this excellent text Alcock provides a historical overview of sociobiology and evolutionary psychology, reviews the various controversies, and tackles key objections and misconceptions head on

using human and animal case histories that cover beauty, mate preferences, sexual jealousy, sex differences and the like. He also discusses the practical applications of this discipline.

While this is a much recommended text for any student or academic wishing to familiarise themselves with the various objections to sociobiology, and how such criticisms may be flawed, I fear that it is in a sense preaching to the converted. The various objectors to sociobiology are unlikely to have their faith shaken by reading this book.

■ *Dr Nick Neave is at the University of Northumbria, Newcastle upon Tyne.*