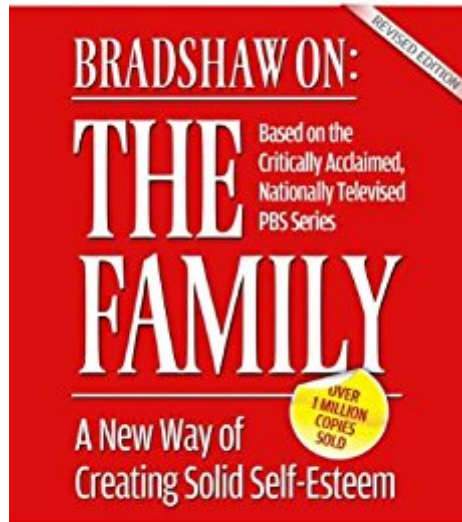


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Bradshaw On: The Family: A New Way Of Creating Solid Self-Esteem

#1 *New York Times* Bestseller



JOHN BRADSHAW



Synopsis

Based on the public television series of the same name, Bradshaw On: The Family is John Bradshaw's seminal work on the dynamics of families that has sold more than a million copies since its original publication in 1988. Within its pages, you will discover the cause of emotionally impaired families. You will learn how unhealthy rules of behavior are passed down from parents to children, and the destructive effect this process has on our society. Using the latest family research and recovery material in this new edition, Bradshaw also explores the individual in both a family and societal setting. He shows you ways to escape the tyranny of family-reinforced behavior traps--from addiction and co-dependency to loss of will and denial--and demonstrates how to make conscious choices that will transform your life and the lives of your loved ones. He helps you heal yourself and then, using what you have learned helps you heal your family. Finally, Bradshaw extends this idea to our society: by returning yourself and your family to emotional health, you can heal the world in which you live. He helps you reenvision societal conflicts from the perspective of a global family, and shares with you the power of deep democracy: how the choices you make every day can affect--and improve--your world.

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Customer Reviews

This book saved my life! After years of counseling with therapists who were just counter-transferring their own unresolved issues onto me, Bradshaw helped me see the roots of my "mental illness" were from my upbringing in a patriarchal, totalitarian, authoritarian, rigid family & religious system. I was always made to feel by these systems that there was something defective about ME when, in actuality, THEY were highly dysfunctional. In turn, that led me to seek therapy by therapists indoctrinated in these same systems. After realizing that going to my church for counseling was actually the antithesis of psychological & spiritual growth, I discovered the tools in Bradshaw's important work to heal myself. As a theologian, Bradshaw beautifully discerns the difference between spirituality & religion - that the more religious a person is, the less spiritual they are. That mature, spiritual people accept others just as they are & that religious people & systems narcissistically strive to create cookie-cutter people who act, think & believe that same way they do. I've come to the conclusion that every therapist I hired chose counseling as a way to avoid looking at their own issues. Receiving a different diagnosis from each therapist proves this to me. This comes without blame directed toward my primary caregivers as I realize that they were "mystified" by the same family & religious systems. I will never again look outside myself for approval. I honestly feel that Bradshaw's work (and the other psychologists he gives praise & credit to) is the most profound psychological & spiritual work of the 20th century. If you read this amazing book your life will never be the same. You will be unable to live your life the way you always have & it will change the way you see yourself & others forever.

The central idea of Bradshaw's book is an interesting one: that in recent decades, psychological research has begun to focus on seeing the family as an emotional system, and that one can't just study an individual's psychological difficulties without seeing his or her role in the family & the family's interactions. Families each have their own unique culture which creates an emotional environment that children learn from & absorb. People growing up in healthy families become mature healthy people, who have their own identity & have a healthy separation from their family; they have learned that they are free to feel what they feel and express it even if it goes against the family "script," roles, or views. If there are disagreements, then people fight fairly, with nobody is trying to manipulate each other or use each other to satisfy unmet emotional needs. Bradshaw then looks at the dynamics in dysfunctional families. He examines, in turn, families with alcoholics, families who are physically or emotionally abusive, and those that are co-dependent. These families may have problems with enmeshment, guilt, control, shame, family secrets, continuous fighting or

no fighting because "wrong" emotions are forbidden. He highlights the fact that dysfunctional families often have dysfunctional kids, who then seek out, find, and marry other dysfunctional people (since they act in a familiar, though dysfunctional, way). In this way, certain family problems such as alcoholism, violence, and so on can be handed down across generations. Because of this, one should examine one's problems in the context of one's family, and always look for the "problem behind the problem" (i.e. ask what drives one to drink? Rather than just address alcoholism as an addiction).

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