



All You Need Is Love and Other Lies About Marriage: A Proven Strategy to Make Your Marriage Work, from a Leading Couples Therapist

By John W. Jacobs

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Why is it so difficult to remain married in the twenty-first century, and what can you do about it?

We all know that half of today's marriages end in divorce, but we tend to believe that our own marriages are safe. As psychiatrist John Jacobs explains in this fresh and impassioned book, marriages today are incredibly fragile, and unless a couple understands what is making contemporary marriage so vulnerable to dissolution, the marriage is at risk.

Part of the problem is that people refuse to see how social and historical forces have changed the very meaning of marriage, causing serious interpersonal unhappiness. Because of increased longevity, married people live together longer than at any time in history. There's been an erosion of the social and cultural forces that traditionally kept marriages together. Confusion over gender-role responsibilities, increased expectations of sexual satisfaction, and intense time pressures on couples to work and be successful all create marital stress.

And yet, most people don't acknowledge the problems in their marriage until it is too late. We tend to believe in the "lies of marriage" -- such concepts as soul mates, unconditional love, that children improve a relationship, that the sexual revolution has made marital sex more pleasurable, or that egalitarian marriage offers couples easy solutions -- and forget to engage in the constant hardwork required to keep our marriages alive.

Dr. Jacobs believes that most marriages have significant problems at some time, but until we recognize the new realities of marriage and develop the skills required to sustain a loving, intimate relationship, marriages are at risk.

Of course marriage is about love. But that's just the beginning.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

This particularly thoughtful and articulate volume marks the arrival of major new voice in couple's psychology. A professor at NYU's School of Medicine, Jacobs has also run a private psychiatric practice for the past 30 years, and his experience working with couples in both locations informs the practical, realistic view of marriage he presents in this book. "Virtually everyone has significant problems at some time in their marriage," he acknowledges. Some of those problems are made by husbands and wives, he explains; some of them are caused by biology, or by the tremendous social and economic changes of the past 40 years. Some are handed down generation after generation in families. Jacobs considers each of these sources in turn as he deconstructs "The Seven Lies of Marriage"—among them the ideas that "people don't really change" and that "children solidify a marriage." While the book's myth-busting structure resembles that of many pop psychology guides, Jacobs's advice is noticeably more sophisticated. His tone is friendly and impartial, and he makes no false promises. "Marital relationships," he writes, "are by their very nature fraught with difficulty and vulnerability." It takes dedication to make them comfortable, loving and fair year after year, he says, and the tools he outlines go a long way toward making that task easier. He teaches readers how to overcome anger and resentment without sacrificing their needs. He explains how couples work as "systems" of action and reaction, and gives them ways to break "negative emotional spirals." Men, in particular, will appreciate his concerted effort to recognize the complaints and desires of both genders. In fact, Jacobs's book is so well organized and insightful that even happily married couples may find it useful. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Review

"This particularly thoughtful and articulate volume marks the arrival of a major new voice in couple's psychology." (Publishers Weekly)

"Enlightening...puts the conflicts of modern married couples into historical and cultural perspective. Astute [and] authentic." (Cleveland Plain Dealer)

About the Author

John W. Jacobs, M.D., is a psychiatrist in private practice in Manhattan. He is a Clinical Associate Professor of Psychiatry at the New York University School of Medicine where he teaches couples and family therapy to psychiatric residents. He lives in New York City with his wife and children.

Users Review

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