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Ties That Stress: The New Family Imbalance

By David Elkind



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What has happened to the American family in the last few decades? And what are these changes doing to our children? David Elkind, renowned child psychologist and author of *The Hurried Child*, has devoted his career to these urgent questions. This eloquent book puts together all the puzzling facts and conflicting accounts to show us as never before what the American family has become.



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Ties That Stress: The New Family Imbalance By David Elkind Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #1606415 in Books
- Published on: 1998-07-21
- Released on: 1998-08-20
- Ingredients: Example Ingredients
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.00" h x .68" w x 6.00" l, .81 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 272 pages

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

Well known for *The Hurried Child* (Addison-Wesley, 1988), Elkind focuses on the family unit in his latest publication. Supporting his arguments with a well-documented study of the family, Elkind (child study, Tufts Univ.) is critical of both the modern nuclear family for its imbalance toward the child and the postmodern permeable family for its imbalance toward the parents. The "nuclear family" is defined as the family of the 1950s, characterized by romantic love, unilateral authority, and domesticity. The "permeable family" is the current paradigm, characterized by consensual love, shared parenting, mutual authority, and autonomy. Though his critique is not unique, Elkind concludes that hope can be found for the development of the "vital family" to replace both earlier models. The vital family-characterized as one that "energizes and nurtures the abilities and talents of both children and their parents"-would combine the best of both models and would accommodate the changes in society that have been occurring at an increasingly rapid rate. An essential purchase for academic, including community college libraries, this important work also belongs in larger public libraries.

Kay Brodie, Chesapeake Coll., Wye Mills, Md.

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Review

In style and content...this book is addressed to the general reader...[It] seeks to answer the question: What should we do as traditional family structures seem to be crumbling?...[Elkind] thinks the solution lies with a change in parental behavior. He sees contemporary families 'stumbling' toward a new balance between the needs of the children and the needs of the parents, one that integrates the mutual responsibility of the traditional family with the freedoms of the contemporary family...Let's hope that Elkind is right. (Douglas J. Besharov *Washington Post Book World*)

Elkind...is as much a child advocate as an intellectual guru, and his dissection of what's gone wrong for children in America today is written with passion and clarity. (*Washington Times*)

A thoughtful effort, one of the most thoughtful I have come across, to...make sense of the overpowering changes that have taken place within a generation...A powerful new analysis of how family life in general has changed over the last thirty years, altering not just the experience of childhood but that of adulthood as well...Building on a complete substructure of work in social history, psychology, and social research, Elkind develops a systematic argument for how we got from then to now, from the nuclear family of the modern period to the fragmented family of the postmodern. (Edward Shorter, Ph.D. *Readings: A Journal of Reviews and Commentary in Mental Health*)

This book has many strengths, the first being that it is a well-documented study of family life. The author consistently builds on his past work and cites outstanding scholars as he traces the history of family life...This book is a valuable contribution to the vast body of literature that focuses on families. It provides a clear picture of why family life has changed...[and] aids in clarifying the strengths and weaknesses of idealized family life. (Sharon J. Price *Phi Kappa Phi Journal*)

Elkind's new book sums up the changes we are all witnessing and their cost to children. A very good, worthwhile book written by someone from the 'inside.' (T. Berry Brazelton, M.D., author of *Touchpoints*)

Elkind's book should be read for its contribution to understanding recent changes in the American family,

and for its important, yet debatable, application of the concept of postmodernism to the family. (James T. Mathieu *New Oxford Review*)

About the Author

David Elkind, Professor of Child Study at Tufts University, is the author of many books, including *The Hurried Child: Growing Up Too Fast Too Soon*.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Mamie Wilson:

The book *Ties That Stress: The New Family Imbalance* can give more knowledge and information about everything you want. So just why must we leave a very important thing like a book *Ties That Stress: The New Family Imbalance*? A number of you have a different opinion about guide. But one aim which book can give many facts for us. It is absolutely appropriate. Right now, try to closer with the book. Knowledge or info that you take for that, you could give for each other; you are able to share all of these. Book *Ties That Stress: The New Family Imbalance* has simple shape but you know: it has great and big function for you. You can search the enormous world by start and read a reserve. So it is very wonderful.

Colleen Key:

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Jane Rich:

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