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The Chosen Lives of Childfree Men

By Patricia W. Lunneborg



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More and more couples are choosing not to have children. While much attention has been paid to this trend from a woman's point of view, men are often seen as having a secondary role in this choice, as ready to accept whatever their partners decide. In an age when men are expected to be caregivers as well as breadwinners and encouraged to take on more parental responsibilities, this volume argues that they need to be active participants in this crucial, life-altering decision. Based on in-depth interviews with 30 American and British childless men, this is the first book to explore the motives and consequences of voluntary childlessness from a man's perspective.

The interviewees explain the reasons for their choice and explore its impact on their freedom, relationships, job opportunities, and finances. They also discuss their mixed feelings, their family background, and their concern over the world's ever-growing population. The picture that emerges challenges the stereotype of men who decide against parenthood as immature, selfish, and irresponsible. Although each man provides several reasons, the author identifies nine main types of childfree men, including workaholics, lifelong learners, early retirees, stress reducers, and men who don't want to repeat the mistakes of their parents.



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Editorial Review

Review

“The results [of this book] hold substantial interest, for they tell us not only about men's experiences of childlessness, but also about the great gap between the experiences of `childfree' men and women.... For the social scientist the study provides an eye-opening look at an underexamined subject and suggests a wealth of hypotheses to guide future research.”—Population and Development Review

“Lunneborg's book makes a strong contribution to the narrative literature on motives to remain childless.”—Contemporary Sociology

“This book fills an important gap in our understanding of men, their feelings, motivations, and reasons for staying childfree. Patricia Lunneborg has let us see the real men behind the public silence on the topic of reproductive choice for men: they are not 'selfish'--but they are conscious of what makes life meaningful for them....Read this book and you will get insights about gender, lifestyle, and masculinity that you never had before.”—Pepper Schwartz Professor of Sociology University of Washington Author of *Love Between Equals*, *What I Learned about Sex*

“There is something in this book that every man can relate to, and every man should read it--with or without his partner.”—Jerry Steinberg Founder of the non-profit social club, NO KIDDING!

About the Author

PATRICIA LUNNEBORG is a former Professor of Psychology and Adjunct Professor of Women's Studies at the University of Washington. She has published more than 100 scholarly articles and is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association (Counseling Division). Since her retirement, she has written several books, including *Women Changing Work* (Bergin & Garvey, 1990) and *Abortion: A Positive Decision* (Bergin & Garvey, 1992).

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