

## Women Growing Older

Psychological Perspectives

Until now, little existed in the way of a theory of gender and aging. This volume fills the void. Rich with primary data, *Women Growing Older* presents new research on older women and relates it to the psychology of adult development and aging. After an introductory chapter that brings together conceptions of gender and aging, well-known contributors examine how women decide to balance work and career, marriage and motherhood, and the results of such life decisions. The authors then take an adult life-span approach to Americans' gender and racial stereotypes of young, middle-aged, and elderly women. A penetrating historical analysis of cultural images and the nature of cognition, mind, and creativity follows. The contributors also present a life-span approach to attachment theory and women's social relations. They also take a look at the relevance of psychodynamic theories for understanding gender among older women. Students, researchers, and professionals in the fields of aging, gender, psychology, sociology, family studies, social work, and nursing will appreciate the excellent material and insights contained in *Women Growing Older*. "Women Growing Older is a powerful and a highly technical book. The authors describe how the focus on sex differences rather than on similarities serves to perpetuate male dominance. Their research findings demonstrate that resulting sex differences are invariably used against women. Sex roles are internalized early in life by the process of social learning and socialization; these are then enacted into adulthood in different social settings. Their research looks at the content of gender stereotypes and they then explore the process that people use in deciding what other people are like." --Journal of Mental Health and Aging "This edited book has several major strengths. A portion of the book addresses the ways in which women balance work and family and the consequences of these decisions or 'choices' in late life. Such research is timely and especially challenging given the differential experience of successive cohorts that accompanies historical shifts in assessments of family life. Given its importance, this topic could fill an entire text itself. This volume provides an important contribution to the literature. It is a valuable resource for the college or master's level student of psychology, women's studies, and gerontology." --Journal of Women and Aging "The chapters combine reviews and presentation of fresh empirical data. A valuable compilation. Upper-division graduate through faculty." --Choice "This is the first book (of which I am aware) to provide a theoretical integration of feminist perspectives on the psychology of aging in terms of women's experiences. I believe the editors have done a superb job of selecting chapter authors, and the authors in turn have written interesting, enlightening, and provocative analyses of gender issues in adult development and aging. I am impressed with the wide range of theoretical frameworks that the authors incorporated in their analyses; researchers and students alike should find plenty of ideas for useful approaches to their own projects. I am also impressed with the range of methods and samples represented in the chapters. By their approach to selecting the contents of the book, the editors employed feminist principles of acknowledging (a) heterogeneity of experience across groups of women, whether categorized by cohort, racial ethnic background, or stage of the life course, and (b) the importance of using diverse methods to gather data. Finally, I liked the way the authors locate their topics and theoretical approaches in the historical context of the development of knowledge so that readers gain understanding of some of the reasons that current research and theory development are at their current statuses. Thus, both the method and the content of the book reflect the principles the editors and authors advocate." --Rosemary Blieszner, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University "This is an interesting and varied book. It is useful in an area which has traditionally perceived gender as almost a peripheral factor in the psychological experience of older women. definitely worth a look." --Health Psychology Update "Turner's introduction and Labouvie-Vief's chapter 'Women's Creativity and Images of Gender' take a different form. The former is an excellent summary of the book's purpose, a brief description of differing

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