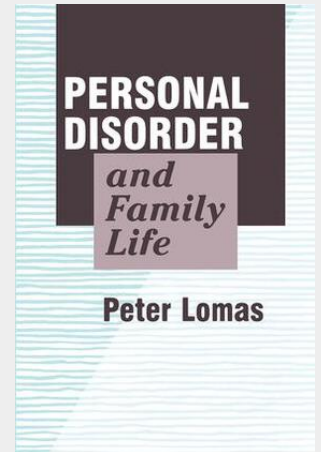


## Personal Disorder and Family Life

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This work looks into how, why, and when people pursue things in life that they desire, those that make their existence attractive and worth living. Robert A. Stebbins calls this "Positive Sociology," the study of what people do to organize their lives such that they become substantially rewarding, satisfying, and fulfilling. Western society has many challenges: crime, drug addiction, urban pollution, daily stress, domestic violence, and overpopulation. Significant levels of success in avoiding these problems brings a noticeable measure of tranquility, but it does not necessarily generate a positive life. Personal Decisions in the Public Square draws upon, in large part, the sociology of leisure, a "happy science." Among the basic concepts in the sociology of leisure are activity and human agency. The centrality of positive activity is one of its hallmarks and separates it from other social science specialties. Stebbins's positive sociology centers on conceptual roots found in the "serious leisure" perspective. This theoretical framework synthesizes three main forms of leisure (serious, casual, and project-based) while showing their distinctive features, similarities, and interrelationships. Positive sociology also considers two other domains of life: work and non-work obligations. This new approach focuses on the pursuit of "that which makes life worth living." Stebbins explores goals that are important to all people, such as negotiating the right work/family or obligation/leisure balance and the tricky relationship between money and happiness. Research scientists or the general public may find the ideas presented in this volume help them better understand and negotiate situations, by showing how to approach them in a positive way rather than as "problems" that need to be solved.



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